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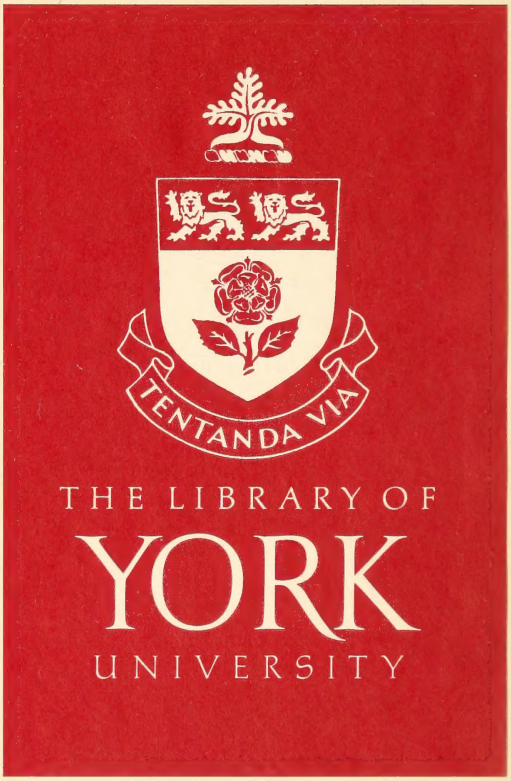

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MEMORIES OF TRAVEL

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TORONTO

MEMORIES OF TRAVEL

BY

mes Bryce, VISCOUNT BRYCE

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1923

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Dedication

It had been the intention of the author to dedicate this volume to Sir Courtenay Ilbert. Since that cannot be, it is now offered to him in memory of a friendship of sixty years and of many days of companionship in travel.

PREFACE

THE sketches of travel gathered together in this volume represent only a small part of what the author intended to publish; but few and slight though they be, they may serve as an illustration of the scope and variety of his experiences in all parts of the world.

James Bryce was a great lover of nature—an inheritance from his father, with whom he rambled in boyhood over the Scottish and Irish mountains, and from whom, and also from an uncle (Dr. William Bryce of Edinburgh), he acquired the taste for geology and botany which was a never-failing source of pleasure throughout his life. This love of natural scenery, combined with an intense interest in the countries and peoples of the world, led him to devote his vacations, whenever possible, to travelling, and a steady and systematic pursuit of this object enabled him in the course of years, in spite of a life well filled with other work, to accomplish much. Some of these travels have already been described at greater length in the volumes on *Transcaucasia and Ararat* (1876), *South Africa* (1895), and

South America (1910). Travels in countries such as Egypt (1887), India (1888), Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand (1912), and Japan, Corea, and China (1913), were not recorded in book form, nor were they fit subjects for brief description. But wherever he voyaged it was his habit to note down at the time, and while they were still fresh in his memory, impressions of travel which could later on be developed and expanded into fuller sketches or short articles. Such, for instance, were notes referring to days spent in the Balearic Islands and the Canaries; to climbs in the Pyrenees and a visit to the little Republic of Andorra; or again, an account of the Hawaiian Islands and of the ascent of the interesting volcano Kilauea; of Mexico with its snow-clad volcanoes, its varied vegetation, and its memories of the Aztecs and the Conquistadores; and of a short tour in Cuba and Jamaica on the way back. There were notes, too, on Sicily and Corsica, Constantinople, the Greek Islands, with Ithaca and Troy, North Africa from Tunis to Tangier, and through the Pillars of Hercules to French Morocco and the old Moorish cities of Rabat, Fez, and Marrakeesh. Impressions of all these countries, with reflections inspired by their natural beauty and historical interest, were to have found a place in these *Memories of Travel* had leisure permitted; but the necessary completion of other work intervened, and they

remained unwritten. The earlier years were chiefly devoted to mountain-climbing; but in 1872 the journey to Iceland (in company with his Oxford friends Sir Courtenay Ilbert and Sheriff Æneas Mackay of Edinburgh), which forms the first of the sketches here published, broke entirely new ground and left a deep impression on his mind. The sense of remoteness, the loneliness of the desert, the savage, almost sinister, aspect of the volcanic region with its harsh tones of colour, appealed strongly to his imagination, contrasting strangely as it did with the civilisation and education of the people; and an unexpected detention in the country enabled him to master sufficient Icelandic to read the literature of the Sagas—an unfailing source of pleasure to him throughout his life. The expeditions in the Polish and Hungarian Alps were made with Leslie Stephen in 1878 in places at that time little frequented by English travellers. His companion in the Alps in 1884 was Edward Bowen of Harrow, and their tour was undertaken with the purpose of following the famous march of the Russian General Suvaroff in the campaign against the French in 1799, when, with troops and artillery, he crossed the St. Gotthard from the Italian side and attempted to make his way through Canton Schwyz to join the Austrian Archduke Charles at Zürich—an attempt which, though unsuccessful in its main object, led to

one of the most extraordinary achievements in Alpine warfare. The years preceding and following 1884 include unrecorded expeditions in the Alps, the Dolomites, Dalmatia and Montenegro, the Balkans and Macedonia, as well as the more distant travels previously referred to. The visit to the Islands of the Southern Pacific was made in 1912 in passing from San Francisco to New Zealand and Australia; and the journey through Siberia, and two hundred miles up the Obi River and across the steppe to the Altai Mountains, in 1913, on the way home from the United States after retiring from his post at Washington. Palestine (including a visit to Petra), which had long been looked forward to, was achieved in the spring of 1914, three months before the outbreak of the Great War, and the weeks spent there, partly driving through the country and partly riding and camping, gave him his last sight of the Near East which he had first entered thirty-eight years before. In 1920 he revived his memories of Southern Spain and added a short expedition to French Morocco; and in 1921 he crossed the Atlantic for the eleventh and last time to pay a farewell visit to the United States.

The travels here referred to, which covered a period of some sixty years and comprised an extraordinary variety of climate, scenery, and vegetation, as well as of human races and institu-

tions, constantly stimulated powers of observation which were exceptional and were used to their full extent. In these days the born traveller, with all his faculties alert, and all the facilities of modern travel at his command, has a world of unending interest and pleasure within his grasp, and the desire to share the interest and the beauty of these experiences with those who may not have had a like opportunity, suggested the records, of which only these few can now be given to his friends.

I desire to acknowledge with grateful thanks the help received from Lord Bryce's friends, Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Mr. Douglas Freshfield, and Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, who have kindly read through the proofs of these articles and made the alterations and corrections that were necessary.

E. M. BRYCE.

HINDLEAP,
December 10, 1922.

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IMPRESSIONS OF ICELAND (1872)

I SHALL not attempt in the compass of these few pages to give an account of Iceland, either physically, or socially, or statistico-economically, or politically, or historically, or from any of the other points of view of a gazetteer. There are several fairly good books of travel (Henderson's, the oldest, is still the best) in which those who are curious will find the extraordinary natural phenomena and the manners of the natives treated of at full length. All I desire to do here is to give some sort of notion of the kind of impression which the scenery and the people make on a passing traveller—a thing which is what one chiefly wishes to know about strange countries, though it is often that which it is hardest to convey.

Iceland is most easily described by negatives. There are no trees, though apparently there were plenty in the tenth century, when we hear of men hiding among them and being hanged from them. No corn is grown, nor any other crop, except a few turnips and potatoes, which taste only half-ripe. The only wild quadrupeds are the blue fox (who has probably come, as the white bear

now and then does, on ice-floes from Greenland), and the reindeer—the latter introduced about a century ago, and still uncommon, ranging over the desert mountains. There is no town except the capital, a city of 1800 people, no other place deserving to be called even a village, unless it be the hamlet of Akureyri, on the shore of the Arctic Ocean, with some fifty houses; no inns (save one in that village whose resources consist of two beds, a single jug and basin, and a billiard-table); no hens, ducks, or geese (except wild geese), no pigs, no donkeys, no roads, no carriages, no shops, no manufactures, no dissenters from the established Lutheranism, no army, navy, volunteers, or other guardians of public order (except one policeman in Reykjavík), no criminals, only two lawyers, and finally no snakes. "What, then, is there?" Snow mountains, glaciers, hot springs, volcanoes, earthquakes, northern lights, ravens, morasses, and, above all, deserts.

Or rather—there is the Desert! For Iceland—and this is a point which none of the books of travel bring out—Iceland is really one vast desert fringed by a belt of pasture land which lies along the more level parts of the coast, and here and there runs up the valleys of the great rivers into the interior. And a desert in Iceland does not mean merely a land waste and solitary, such as large parts of Scotland and Ireland have become (especially since deer forests grew to be so profit-

able), but land that has always been and will always be desolate—land bare and drear, treeless, shrubless, grassless, where not a sheep or pony can browse, and where, by consequence, man can never plant his dwelling. Of this great central space a part is occupied by glaciers and snow-fields. One tremendous mass, out of which the highest peaks of the island rise, covers an area of some four thousand square miles, has never been crossed, and never will be.[1] The mountains are not very high; but then the level of perpetual snow is only some 3000 feet above the sea, and the larger glaciers descend almost to the sea-level. Other parts are filled by volcanic mountains surrounded by fields of rugged lava, sometimes, like the great Odaða Hraun, spreading over hundreds of miles, and not only barren but waterless. The rest is an undulating waste of black volcanic sand and pebbles, or perhaps, what is most dismal of all, an expanse of bare earth strewed with loose blocks of stone, from among which no herb springs, over which the nimble pony can hardly pick its way. On the lava fields one may have at least shrublets of dwarf birch and willow, nestling, with a few tiny ferns, in the chinks and hollows of the mouldering rock, but on these stony wastes all is desolation—not a flower, not an insect, not a bird, except the sombre raven,

[1] If this refers to the Vatna Jökull, the prediction appears to have been falsified, for this ice-field has been crossed three times, viz., in 1875, in 1904, and in 1912. Information contributed by Mr. Douglas Freshfield.

Odin's companion, least of all a sign of human presence. A far less imaginative people than the Icelanders might easily have peopled such a wilderness with trolls and demons.

Round the northern and western coasts, and in some of the broad river valleys of the north-eastern and south-western corners of the isle, the aspect of nature is less forbidding; for there one finds stretches of pasture land, flower-spangled in the earlier summer months, with now and then a farm-house, cosily placed upon some sunny slope, the grass hillocks of its tun[1] all round, and a bright stream murmuring below. Yet even in these more favoured regions a great deal of the surface is covered with dreary bog, and the land shows always a tendency to relapse—so to speak—into a desert. On a sudden, with no apparent provocation, you find, as you ride along, that the grass comes to an end, and you may then travel for miles and miles over bare earth and stones before it reappears again on the banks of some deep flowing stream. This is so round Reykjavík itself, the capital of the island, where the pasture land stops with the houses, and five minutes beyond the last tun one looks round upon an utter wilderness. As the life of man depends upon that of sheep and cows, and as sheep and cows depend

[1] Every baer (farm-house or city; the same word which appears in England as "by"—Derby, Grimsby) has its tun (town), a small enclosure of carefully-mown grass land; the greater part of it is usually covered with hillocks a foot or eighteen inches high.

upon grass, it follows that houses are few and far between even in the more habitable and civilised districts, while villages are unknown altogether. Seldom does one find more than one house where the map marks what the inexperienced traveller supposes to be a town, unless, indeed, on the coast, where sometimes two or three fishermen's huts lie near together. And from one house to another it is often five, six, or seven hours' riding.

Of the scenery I am rather reluctant to speak, because I know from experience that the effect produced on the reader will not be that which the writer desires. It is very strange and peculiar; solemn and stern, and, in its way, most stimulating. But we[1] found that everybody who asked us about it on our return, and had it described to him, went away with the notion that it was merely bleak and gloomy, perhaps downrightly ugly. This came of too much anxiety to be veracious. We described the actual features, the black and white of the country (it is a country of blacks and whites), and did not convey the impression it made. Very likely the same thing will happen now, and the present reader will form the same conception of Iceland as a dismal sort of place,

[1] "We" means a party of three friends, who spent two months in Iceland in the autumn of 1872, and who, strange to say, after being two months incessantly in company under considerable hardships, remain friends still. Their opinions, however, about the island and its people differed extremely, and the other two are not responsible for anything said here.

with little to attract the lover of nature. Nevertheless, it is something more than that.

The elements of beauty in natural scenery are nobleness of form and richness of colour, with a certain measure of variety in both of these. Great size is, of course, sometimes desirable to produce majesty, yet certainly less necessary than we are apt to fancy. Now, as respects both form and colour, Iceland is badly off. The mountains are all of igneous rock, sometimes of basalt, amygdaloid, and the various kinds of trap, sometimes of more recent lavas and tuffs. The former have usually a tabular, the latter frequently a conical shape, but in neither are the outlines generally bold or noble. The basaltic hills are apt to be long flat-topped ridges of only slightly varying height, with abrupt and often precipitous faces, but singularly wanting in "sky-line." Sometimes, when they front the sea, they break down towards it in a superb range of crags; sometimes in the middle of them one finds a grand "corrie," or hollow encircled by precipices, but usually they are the least picturesque of mountains, no better than those Ochil hills in Scotland, or the trappean mountains of Ulster, which in geological character they much resemble. The volcanic mountains proper do occasionally show finer forms—cones, though generally rather blunt and lumpy cones, like that of Hekla, serrated ridges, and here

and there a group of jagged peaks, the fragments of some huge old crater which has been broken down and left these pieces of its rim standing up alone. But even such peaks and ridges are rather wanting in beauties of detail. One does not find those patches of cliff alternating with grass slopes, or those deep little glens and gullies, which lend so much charm to the hill-sides of Scotland or Norway. And the mountains are mostly separated, not by valleys, as with us, but by level or undulating plains, which more completely detach the hills from one another, and give less occasion for the graceful curves and sweeps which are as essential to the beauty of the lower parts of mountains as bold and sharp-cut lines are to the higher peaks. In these plains lie the lakes, which are seldom fine, because the shores are low and you can see the whole of them at once. They lie among hills, but the hills do not dip straight into the water; there is none of that mysterious winding away behind promontories one has at Killarney, or Ullswater, or Loch Lomond. As for colour, there are in Iceland (besides the white of the snow mountains) two colours and no more: to wit, intense volcanic black and the yellowish green of the marshy plains. Sometimes the black is wonderfully effective. In particular states of the atmosphere, and especially about sunset, it will turn to the richest purple or violet.

Rising in inaccessible crags of lava, it is terribly stern; and where, as at the bottom of the cone of Hekla, it is powdered over with snow and ice, the contrast has a strikingly weird effect. So the yellow-green is a fine hue, especially in such clear air as that of Iceland, where the lights and shadows of the clouds playing over these broad open surfaces are inexpressibly beautiful. But one grows tired of the constant combination of these two colours only, unrelieved by intermediate shades. No reds, either of earth, or rocks, or heather bloom; no greys or light blues of limestone, such as one has in the Alps; no dark blues of slate rock, like those of Wales; no greens of fir, or beech, or oak, or hazel copse. Trees are wanting everywhere,[1] and any one can fancy how much the landscape loses thereby in softness and variety. For one thing, there are no foregrounds, and the country is therefore as unfit for a painter as any really grand country can be. Wherever there is a fine prospect it is a distant and extensive one. One does not come upon gracious little cascades or wooded dells, or flowery lawns sloping to a brook, or groups of grey boulders overgrown by fern and brushwood, such as the sketcher loves—all these, all the smaller and more tender beauties of landscape, are wanting. Bare, un-

[1] To be strictly accurate, I will say that we came upon a pretty little thicket of birches in one of the northern valleys, and a rowan tree in the middle of the houses at Akureyri.

dulating flats of bog or stone, traversed by foaming rivers, and backed by wild, irregular, isolated mountains, sometimes snow-covered, sometimes black and rugged — such are the general elements of an Icelandic view, and it needs all the vivid brilliance of the air, and the dignity which vast extent gives, to redeem them from dreariness and monotony. The Danes, between whom and the Icelanders there is little love lost, have a saying that "God made the rest of the world, but the devil made Iceland." Natives of flat and sandy Denmark may have no right to be heard on a question of natural beauty, yet there is a sort of meaning in this Manichæan view of theirs. Iceland looks as if it had been made, I will not say by a malignant power, but by itself, by chance, by the ungoverned action of natural causes, without any purpose to produce beauty. There are regions in the world, parts of the Bernese Oberland for instance, or the central Pyrenees, and perhaps not least notably the English Lake country, where one feels as if the forces of nature had consciously laboured to mould and adorn a landscape delightful to human eyes, combining, as at Rosenlaui or in the valley of Derwentwater, hills, woods, rocks, and water, so as to create at every turn the most exquisitely finished pictures. In Iceland the elements of beauty and grandeur, or at least the chief among them,

mountains, lakes, glaciers, rapid rivers, are present; but they are so ill-placed towards one another—so little wrought out, so to speak—that a perfect landscape is rarely the result. There are many thrilling notes, but no harmony.

"What a gloomy, dismal, uninteresting country!" Gloomy? well, yes: dismal? sometimes: uninteresting? certainly not. There is something so singular about the scenery; so peculiar a sentiment, if one may use the expression, that one is often more profoundly and permanently impressed by it than by other regions which are more truly beautiful or sublime. Everywhere is silence, desolation, monotony; one is awed by the presence of the most tremendous forces of nature—fire which has reared these peaks and poured out these lava torrents; frost which rends the rocks and soil and frowns down on you from the interminable ice ridges. One knows oneself surrounded by a tempestuous ocean, far removed from even those outposts of civilisation, Norway and the Shetland Isles; in a land wholly out of relation to the rest of the world, and unaffected by its fortunes; a land where nothing has happened for many centuries; a land which seems not designed for man at all, but left waste for Nature to toss wildly about the materials she did not need elsewhere, and disport her in sudden displays of her own terrible powers. The eye ranges over these vast black landscapes of the

interior, and finds among them not only no trace of human habitation, but scarcely a grassy nook where a human habitation might be planted. Sahara itself is not more hopelessly sterile; and however full the world may in time become, little prospect is there that any new band of emigrants will turn their prows to the stormy shores of Iceland.

Perhaps the best way to give a notion of the sort of effect which the scenery produces on a traveller will be to say something about two characteristic views which came in our way. Very likely there are others finer. We had not time to reach the southern slope of the Vatna with its terrible rivers, on the banks of one of which, a torrent three quarters of a mile long and a mile and a half wide, the traveller is often obliged to halt for weeks before he can venture to cross. Nor have I seen the grand north-west —Breiðifjörðr and the icy valleys of the long Isafjörðr, where glaciers stream down the steep glens into a glassy sea; but I can hardly think that anything even there can be more genuinely Icelandic than what I must now endeavour to describe.

Two days we had been driven over a tossing sea before a southerly gale, two days and nights since the majestic outline of the hill of Hoy,[1]

[1] These old red-sandstone cliffs on the west side of Hoy (a name familiar to the readers of Walter Scott's *Pirate*) are at one point 1100

westernmost and highest of the Orkneys, faded away among the mists that hang for ever round it; and on the morning of the third, grey mountains appeared upon the port bow, and we joyed not less than Ulysses when he saw the Isle of the Phæacians rise like a shield from the sea. The first sight of land after a voyage, be it long or short, is always exciting, and it was now the more so because every one was stirred by the utter strangeness of this untravelled ocean, and perhaps by a slight sense of danger, since nobody on board had ever seen the harbour of Seyðisfjörðr for which we were making. As the vessel drove swiftly nearer, the features of the coast revealed themselves, but the sense of mystery and danger grew almost stronger. Long lines of crags, black or of a grey more dismal than black, rose out of a deep deep sea, sometimes in sheer precipices, piled in terraces one above another, sometimes in steep slopes of loose stone, topped by a range of cliff with more rock slopes and more cliffs above. Highest of all, where the tops of the cliffs seemed to run back into a lofty table-land, walls of rock enclosed deep dark hollows, where the sun never came to melt the snow that filled them; and, last of all, farther back still, sharp peaks and glittering ice-fields rose above the table-land, and peered

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feet in nearly vertical height, and certainly among the grandest in the British Isles. The little mail packet from Scrabster and Stromness passes close under them.

down into the heads of these high ravines. Far up into the heart of this mountain mass ran the narrow winding fiords, the mouth of each guarded by a towering promontory and fringed by rocky islets, over which the billows broke in sheets of foam, marking the whole coast with a line of white. No brushwood, no heather, upon all these slopes and faces, not a blade of grass to vary the black and lamentable brown, not a trace of pasture, not a human dwelling all along the shores, not a sail upon the water, but a cold, grey, cheerless, hazy sea stretching away towards the Pole till it met the cold and steely sky. One thought of that enchanted mountain in the *Arabian Nights* against which ships are driven through an unknown sea; and the thrill of awe and mystery was almost painful, until at length, the desired haven found, we passed between the tremendous portals of one of these long fiords, and gliding swiftly up, cast anchor under the slopes of smiling green that encircle its head.

A fortnight later we had an experience of inland scenery not less impressive. The whole interior of the island is a desert, and although a great part remains unexplored, there are some four routes by which it may be crossed from north-east to south-west, and by one of which, the westernmost, where the desert region is narrowest, it is crossed pretty frequently. Another (Vatnajökulsvegr) has, so far as I

know, been traversed only once, and can never be traversed without serious risk of losing the horses by hunger and exhaustion, and probably getting lost oneself. A third is taken perhaps once or twice a year; and the fourth (Vatnahjallavegr), which we had determined to follow, stimulated to some extent by the mystery that enveloped it, had not been tried for fifteen years or so, and was supposed to be known to only one man in the whole countryside, and who bore the name (common in Iceland) of Sigurðr, the hero of the Völsunga Saga.

On Monday morning at 5 A.M. we started, a party of seventeen horses, three guides, and three Englishmen, from the last house on the north side of the wilderness, a strange, lonely place, where the simple natives had crowded and buzzed round us all the day before, in mingled curiosity and kindness, as if we were visitors from another planet. Climbing out of the valley where this house lay, we reached a high undulating plateau strewn with loose rough slabs of stone, like the pavement of a ruined city, with here and there sheets of black water,[1] too small for lakes, too big for pools; patches of bog, and beds of half-thawed snow. The slowly rising clouds showed all round the same country, a land without form and void, a land that seemed as if only half

[1] Called, as we found to our amusement, "Ullarvötn," *i.e.* Ullswaters (=Wool-lakes).

created, with no feature for the eye to dwell upon; neither peaks nor valleys, neither rocks nor grass, but everywhere bare, bleak, blank desolation. It was not always the same, for sometimes there was more snow, sometimes bog, sometimes only stone; but one had no sense of progress in it, and felt as if it might go on for ever. Late in the afternoon the stone changed to a rolling plain of black volcanic pebbles, and coming at last to an oasis of short grass, we halted for an hour to give the horses a feed, though a scanty one, and to discuss our course, for the clouds had now settled down upon us, and there was no seeing more than a few hundred yards in any direction. Track, or mark to indicate a track, there was, of course, none, and Sigurðr admitted that without the Jökull[1] to guide him, he could not tell where we were or which way we were going. Now, the Jökull, though one knew, from the number and whitish colour of the torrents we crossed, that it could not be very far off, was in such weather hopelessly hidden. Onwards, however, we pressed, for night was beginning to fall; and if we could not reach a scrap of pasture that lay some hours ahead, it might go hard with the horses. Everything depended on the horses, for our supply of food was scanty, and the next house one hundred miles

[1] The term Jökull (*J* in Icelandic is pronounced as consonantal *Y*) describes both a perpetual snow-mountain and the glaciers which issue from it.

away. The compass was consulted in vain, and Sigurðr shook his head more and more ominously, till at last, when it was almost dark, and the mist, driven by a piercing wind, was turning to a snow mizzle, there was nothing for it but to halt. The tent was taken off the horse that carried it, and, with fingers so numb that we could scarcely untie its cords, we set about pitching it, while the natives tied our seventeen horses tail and head together to keep them from running off during the night, as their wont is. The tent-pegs took no grip of the soft loose shingle, however deep we drove them in; but when one remarked that the pole would probably fall during the night and bury us all in the ruins, the other two only gave a shivering assent and crawled inside. Then the head of the commissariat served out supper, consisting of some fragments of mouldy biscuit and clammy mutton, with a carefully limited sip of corn brandy; waterproofs were laid down, pillows extemporised out of riding-boots, every scrap of clothing turned to account against the cold, and we lay down to court sleep. The native Icelander regards neither cold nor hunger; but we were less seasoned, and one at least of the party lay awake all night, freezing hard, longing, as Homer says, for the coming of fair-throned Morning, listening resignedly to the sounds, steady and strong as the beats of a steam-engine, that told of the better fortune of a comrade,

trying now and then to relieve the weariness by fixing his mind upon a point of law, but failing always, and slipping off into a wandering reverie, wherein England and civilisation, and all familiar things beyond the great sea, seemed plunged deep in the past or whirled away to an illimitable horizon.

Next morning early when we again mounted and started, unrefreshed, upon our way, everything was still wrapped in cloud, and Sigurðr's mind most of all, he moaning at intervals, "If I could only see the Jökull!" About nine o'clock, however, the mist suddenly rose and then vanished, the sun shone out, and the wished-for Jökull appeared, a long, flat-topped, smooth-sloped ridge of ice (*névé*, one would have called it in the Alps), four or five miles to the east of us, trending away south farther than eye could reach. So the way was now plain, and we rode on as fast as the roughness of the ground permitted, where flats covered with the overflow of glacier torrents alternated with rocky or shingly hills and with the iron billows of successive lava-flows. The scene was unlike yesterday's, as drear and solitary, but with a certain weird splendour of its own. On one side the smooth endless line of snow-field, on the other an immense plain, flooded with sunlight, with a few tiny volcanic cones rising on its extreme western marge. Right in front, two bold snowy mountain groups,

the square mass of Lang Jökull, and opposite it five sharp icy pinnacles capping the ridge of Blángny Jökull; between them a depression, through which we were to pass to the south, and which, so clear was the air, seemed no nearer at six o'clock, after incessant quick riding, than when we had caught sight of it before noon.

The unfruitful sea is not more lonely or more waste than this wilderness, shut in by frozen barriers. Yet it was not a howling wilderness, such as that which awes a child's imagination in the Hebrew prophets, such as that we had traversed the day before; but full of a strange stern beauty, stilling the soul with the stillness of nature. There was not a cloud in the sky, not a bird, not an insect, not a floweret at our feet; only the blue dome of air raining down brightness on the black desert floor, the dazzling snows in front, and far away exquisite tints of distance upon the western peaks. And then the silence, what was ever like it? a silence, not as of death, but as of a time before life was. To us the scene was all the more solemn because of yesterday's cloud and the weary night, for there was nothing to connect what we now saw with the region we had left on the northern side of the desert; we could no more tell how we had got there than how we should get out. It was like a leap into fairyland; and indeed, despite our exhaustion, a delicious leap, for the air was so fine and keen,

the sky so brilliant, the aspect of everything so novel, that the barrenness underfoot, and the sense of danger in case any misfortune befell us, so far from human help, did not seem to depress us; and each rode alone in a sort of grave exhilaration, gazing as in a dream at the hills and drinking in the sunlight, content with silence and the present.

The sun went down as we entered the majestic sand-strewn portal between the two Jökulls, and the eastern one, on whose snows his light lingered longest, glowed with colours more glorious than any we could remember in the Alps; the rose perhaps less vivid than that which burns at dawn upon the Silberhorn, but with it an infinitely varied and tender alternation of violet and purple, opal, and pink and orange, passing from one tint to another in swift iridescent pulses till they died away into chilly blue. Darkness had hardly descended before what had seemed a steel-grey bank of cloud in the north-east turned to an auroral arch, which soon shot forth its streamers across the zenith, throbbing and glancing from one side of heaven to the other, and flinging themselves into exuberant folds and curves of vaporous light. We rode, first by its help, and then stumbling about in utter darkness, all night through, making only one or two short halts for the sake of the wearied horses. The ground was rough, and we were more than half asleep,

exhausted by fasting and excitement, so how we got safely across was a marvel then, and remains so to us now.

When the saffron robe of morning was spread over the east, we were among new mountains, with the pass already far away; and when from behind one of their pinnacles the sun suddenly flamed up, we were descending towards the great White Lake (Hvitarvatn), one of the largest in the country, over whose bosom two glaciers, streaming down between savage ink-black cliffs, scattered a shower of miniature icebergs that sailed about, sparkling in the morning light. It was a wild and striking scene, but not in the least beautiful, and almost too savage to be grand. For there was nothing tender, nothing graceful, nothing picturesque to break the intense grimness of the black mountains, with their blunt, harsh lines, or give variety to the huge sheet of whitish-blue water that washed them; no waterfall flashed among the rocks, no copse wood clothed the glens or dipped into the lake. One had little temptation to linger, especially as the swans that fluttered over the icebergs were too wild to let us approach them; so we hurried on, and after some hours more gained from the top of another pass a boundless prospect over the great south-western plain of the island, Hekla guarding it to the south, while in the distance, puffs of steam marked the spot where the Geysers lie.

The land was greener to the eye, but it was still utterly waste and desolate, nor did we find a place to halt, a human dwelling, and that which is the chief support of life in Iceland, a draught of milk, till after a long and hard day's riding we came at evening to the solitary farm of Haukadalr. Here the valiant Sigurðr departed, having first kissed us after the manner of his people, to return home all alone across the desert; and from this we mounted the red Geyser hill, and pitched our tent close to the boiling basin whence the Great Geyser rises, though now in his old age more rarely, and where all night long the earth shook beneath us with his thundering snorts and groans.

Having been thus betrayed into a sort of personal narrative, I am tempted to go on to describe the Geysers (which are, it need hardly be said, wholly unlike what one expects), and the ascent of Hekla (a perfectly easy one, by the way, even in a snow-storm), and the boiling mud-pits at Námaskaðr, and the obsidian mountain of Hrafntinnuhryggr, and the great Myvatn (Midge-water) Lake, where in July the gnats rise in clouds that hide the sun, and have been known (one hears) to devour a horse and his rider in ten minutes; and, what is most interesting of all, Thingvellir, the seat of the ancient federal parliament of the island, with its wonderful rock chasms, its lake, its waterfall, its Hill of Laws, its swirling pool into which witches were thrown, its island where

judicial duels were fought out. Then there are incidents of travel without end to be enlarged on; the long weariful journeys on horseback at a foot's pace, usually ending in the dark; the encampments in the churches (which serve for inns, and though they supply nothing but a floor to lie down upon, and a pulpit to hang wet clothes from, are yet better than the biting winds without); the crossing of rivers, sometimes on a steed that can scarcely keep its footing among the stones, with the waves rising over its neck; sometimes where the stream is too deep for this amusement, driving in one's whole troop of cavalry with stones and whipcracking, and following in a leaky skiff which the torrent whirls away down its eddies; tent life and its pleasures (not so unmixed under the 66th parallel as Mr. Cook's tourists no doubt find them in Palestine); the internal economy of a baer, and the tricks one is driven to to get a whiff of fresh air among its ancient and fishlike smells; the conversations in dog Latin carried on with a worthy priest who has forgotten the little he once knew; the perpetual buying, selling, swopping, losing, searching for, and abandoning of horses, and general chaffering on the subject of horses, which goes on all day and every day, and which no linguistic difficulties seem to interrupt;[1] the

[1] The first remark which an Icelander makes when he meets you crossing a desert, after the salutation, "Come, thou blest!" is, "What will you take for that horse?" whereto you, of course, answer by naming thrice the animal's value, and the conversation proceeds in a way which can be

food, an inexhaustible topic (although the items are so few), and the ardour with which the famished stranger pounces upon cold trout and sour curds,[1] the only dainties an Icelandic larder supplies—all these and many more details of the whimsical life one leads there I pass over, *spatiis exclusus iniquis*, and leave to be told by others after me, as they have been told by many before. And even about the people, though desiring to say a word or two, I am somewhat afraid to speak, since I cannot speak with confidence. A passing traveller misjudges many things, especially if he is ignorant of the language, and though we learnt to read Icelandic (and very hard work it proved) we could never talk it. In the capital, to be sure, there may be found four or five people who speak English, nearly as many Latin, one or two German, and two or three a language which

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imagined. I am tempted to transcribe a dialogue on the same topic which took place one morning during our stay at Reykjavík. Enter an Icelandic friend: "Bonus dies, domini." "Bonus dies, dulcissime. Sedeas, precor, sedeas, nobisque, si quid novi affers, imperti." "Equos nonne vobis in animo est vestros hic in urbe vendere?" "Immo equidem." "Quomodo?" "Sub hasta." "Sed mihi alium vobis modum proponere liceat. Rusticus quidam ex familia mea nuper advenit; auditoque hominum sermone de equis vestris, mihi dedit mandatum vos rogare quantum pro nigro equo, quantum pro gilvo poscatis." (Short consultation among the vendors.) "Pro gilvo nos scito summam quadraginta imperialium (rikdalers), pro albo autem triginta quatuor poscere." "Gilvum quanti emistis? anne quinquaginta? Ecce autem rusticum meum, Steingrimum nomine." Enter Steingrimr accordingly, and continuation of the bargain through the interpreter.

[1] This is Skyr, a delicacy of long standing, since it is mentioned in the Saga of Egil Skallagrimsson and the Heimskringla. It is eaten with sugar and cream; and what cream!—cream in which the horn spoon stands erect!

goes by the name of French. But the capital is the least genuinely national place in the island, and even there it is with travelled and educated men that one communicates through these various media. From the women, who are usually the best representatives of social character and spirit, of the ideas, feelings, and usages of an average household, we were wholly cut off. They were wonderfully kind and helpful when one came in starving and exhausted after a sixteen hours' ride; and had evidently plenty to say—indeed they said it—but we could only respond by nods and wreathed smiles and interjectional nouns, and try to look as grateful as our power of countenance permitted.

Any one might fancy that people who inhabit such a country would be silent, downcast, gloomy, perhaps sullen and morose; or, at any rate, on Mr. Buckle's principle, superstitious. Nothing of the kind. The average Icelander is more talkative than an average Briton, and much more so than a Spaniard; and though you would not call him downrightly gay, there is no want of cheerfulness and good humour. His position, "far amid the melancholy main," has not made him—as Mr. Disraeli thinks it has made the Irishman—discontented with his country; on the contrary, he tells you it is the fairest land the sun shines on. The solitude of his life in an isolated house, miles and miles from the nearest

neighbour, throws him all the more upon the society of the other inmates, and makes him value a neighbour's visits more than one usually does in London. But there is a way in which external conditions do seem to have affected the modern Icelander, and moulded his character. He is wanting in dash and vigour, and in the spirit of enterprise generally; has little promptitude in his decisions, still less in his movements. Nothing could be more unlike than he is in all these respects to those terrible ancestors of his in the tenth and eleventh centuries, whose whole life was spent in adventures by flood and field, for when they were not harrying our coasts they were waging blood feuds with some neighbouring chieftain at home, or joining in the endless civil wars of Norway. The contrast between the magnificent heroes, whose exploits are written in their own magnificent Sagas, and the inhabitants of modern Iceland, seems much more striking than any which could be drawn between an Englishman, or German, or Frenchman, or Greek (assuming the Greek to be what his name implies) of to-day and his remote forefathers; for it is by no means merely a change of manners that one sees—in the case of the Icelander the very qualities which most strike you in the one are those most conspicuously absent in the other. One cause is probably to be found in the restriction of his energies since the decline of piracy

and the extinction of the independent republic in 1262 to so narrow a field, and to a life which gives no opening to enterprise, where there is no hunting because there is nothing to hunt, little navigation because no wood to build ships, no joint-stock companies because nobody is rich enough to take shares, no public meetings because a man lives fifteen or twenty miles from his nearest neighbour. But something may also be due to the crushing down of their souls by the overwhelming forces of nature. The old Vikings came straight from Norway, where the climate is comparatively genial, and the land productive; but the Icelanders have now for ten centuries been maintaining a ceaseless struggle against frost and fire, and frost and fire have been too much for them. They do not till the ground, for though corn and other crops were raised by the first colonists, these will no longer ripen, and they have given up the attempt to construct roads, to reclaim barren tracts, even to build themselves comfortable houses, because one of the terrible spring or winter storms, or more terrible earthquakes, may destroy in a moment the labour of many years. Despondency and sluggishness may be pardoned to a people which remembers as it were yesterday eruptions like that of the Skaptar Jökull in 1783, which covered with lava and ashes a tract larger than most English counties, and caused, either directly or through the famine

it produced, the death of a fifth part of the whole population of the island. Nor is it so strange that they should set little value on time, or indeed, as one sometimes thought in moments of impatience, regard Time as an implacable enemy, to be got rid of at all hazards and by all devices. For they have always more than enough time for everything they have got to do—more time than they need in the three months' summer to garner in their scanty crop of hay, far more than they need in the long unbroken night of winter for the men to mend their nets and tools, while the women spin and weave the wool into the thick blue vaðmál, and out of it make clothes for the household. Hence an easy-going, listless sort of mind, as well as manner, has grown upon them, which makes them unwilling to hurry or exert themselves, no matter what your urgency, and seems to have rendered them curiously indifferent to discomforts which a little effort might remove or greatly diminish. Nature, to be sure, has a good deal to answer for in the wretchedness of an Icelander's lodging and food. There is no timber, the stone is bad for building purposes, and one must not complain of the absence of luxuries where everything comes over a thousand miles of sea. Still, the house need not be a mere rabbit-burrow, as it mostly is. It is built of sods, with a few blocks of basalt or lava (unmortared, of course) forming the lower

part of some of the chief walls, is roofed with sods laid over the rafters, and covered on the top with grass and weeds, looking, when it stands with a hill behind it, itself so like a hillock that you are in some danger of riding over it, and finding the horse's fore-feet half-way down the smoke-hole before you know where you are. Inside, it is a labyrinth of low, dark, and narrow passages, with tiny chambers opening off them, one of which has, perhaps, some little furniture, a table or board doing duty for a table, a couple of stools, and one or two bedsteads (often in the hollow of the wall). There is a small window, but its frame is fixed so that it cannot be opened. The air, therefore, is never changed, and as the room is seldom or never cleaned; as the chambers are half-full of dried stock fish, and reek with a variety of other hideous smells, any one can fancy what the interior of an Icelandic farm-house is like, and can understand why the first thing to be done on entering it is to light a pipe and smoke furiously till the room is in a cloud.[1] There is but one fire, and that a sorry one, consisting of a few smouldering turves, with twigs thrown on when a blaze is wanted to make the pot boil; it is in the central chamber, called the fire-house (eldhus), and of course does not substantially warm the rest of the house; but although we shivered

[1] Ghastly tales are told by many travellers of the insects; but herein we thought the country maligned, for though reasonably well bitten now and then, we were never eaten up but once.

incessantly, the natives do not seem to find the cold disagreeable. How they get on in winter, having no furs, we could not make out; for when we suggested that perhaps they spent all winter under the eider-down coverlets, which every house possesses, they replied that at no time of the year were they so little in bed. The furniture and internal appointments generally are what you might expect in such rooms; but three things no Icelandic farm wants—books, a coffee-pot, and a portrait of Jón Sigurdsson, the illustrious leader of the patriotic party.

After all, some one will say, this squalor is not worse than that of the poorest cottagers in Ireland or the Scotch highlands, not so bad as what you may see any day in the lowest parts of Liverpool. True enough, but in Liverpool the ignorance and spiritless abasement of the people is in keeping with the wretchedness of their life, whereas in Iceland the contrast between the man and the house he lives in is the strongest possible, and oversets in a delightful manner all one's English notions of fitness. He is poor, to be sure, poor in the sense of having very little ready money—there is less money in all Iceland than in many an English country town. But he is a person of some substance and of eminent respectability. He is in no danger of want; is the owner of horses, sheep, and oxen, very likely of broad lands which his family has

held for centuries. His pedigree not improbably goes back further than that of all but three families in England. He considers himself altogether your equal, behaves as such (though he now no longer hesitates to receive some remuneration for his hospitality), and such, in fact, he is. Along with a certain want of finish in some of his personal habits, he has a complete ease and independence of manner, and a simple courtesy which, as it flows from this ease, is in no danger of being mistaken for servility. He is, moreover, an educated man, who, if a priest, speaks a little Latin, anyhow perhaps a little Danish, has learnt pretty much all that the island has to teach him, and is certain to be familiar with the masterpieces of his own ancient literature. It is this knowledge of the Sagas that has more than anything else given a measure of elevation as well as culture to his mind. It has stimulated his imagination, and added to his people and country a sort of historical dignity which their position in the modern world could never entitle them to. It has also cultivated his taste, given him a turn for reading generally, made him capable of taking in ideas. Few are the houses in Iceland which do not contain a library; and twice, in spots of rather exceptional wretchedness, I found exceptionally good ones—one chiefly of legal and historical treatises, the other an

excellent collection of Sagas and poetry, in a lonely and miserable hovel at the foot of Hekla. It is a remarkable evidence of the power of an old literature which has struck deep root in the minds and affection of the people that, ever since the golden days when that literature sprang up, there have not been wanting, except for about a century and a half of darkness before the Reformation, poets as well as prose writers of substantial merit. The last fifty years have produced several highly valued, and, so far as a stranger can judge, rightly valued by their countrymen; and one is told that at this moment "to be a good skald," as the Sagas express it, is no rare accomplishment, and that many of the farmers and priests at whose houses we stayed are able to turn a neat sonnet on occasion, just as their ancestors were wont to pour forth those strange little poems (visus) which are the despair of modern interpreters. Strangest of all, this literature has preserved the language almost untouched by the wearing and varying influences of time and foreign intercourse. Modern Icelandic has adopted a very few Danish and Latin words, has dropped a few old grammatical forms, and has introduced some slightly different modes of construction. But, for all practical purposes, it is the Icelandic of the twelfth century; and differs less from the language which Egil, son

of Skallagrim, spoke when he fought against the Scots for King Athelstan in A.D. 936 than the English of Tennyson differs from that of Gower, or the French of Michelet from Philip of Comines.

To a traveller, these historic memories which hover round him in Iceland rather heighten the impression of melancholy which its scenery makes. The ghosts of those terrible heroes seem to stalk across the desert plains, mourning the downfall of their isle. All its glories belong to days long past, the days of the free republic; since the submission to Norway it has dropped out of the sight of Europe, its climate has grown more bitter, its people have lost their old force and splendour; they live no longer in spacious dwellings such as the Sagas describe; they fetch home no shiploads of costly spoils from the coasts of Gaul and Spain. But to the people themselves these historic memories bring nothing but pleasure and pride; they spend the long night of winter in listening to the exploits of Gunnar and Bersi, or the wiles of Guðrún, or the unhappy loves of Helga the Fair and Gunnlaugr Snake-tongue read to them as they sit at work by some one planted in the midst. And within the last few years their reviving patriotism, fed by these memories, has extorted from Denmark the re-establishment of the ancient Althing, though in a new form and

at a new place; and will not be content till the rights of the island to local self-government are fully recognised.

Manners are simple in Iceland, as indeed in all the Scandinavian countries; and all the simpler here because there is really no distinction of ranks. Nobody is rich, and hardly anybody abjectly poor; everybody has to work for himself, and works (except, to be sure, a few storekeepers in Reykjavík, and at one or two spots on the coast) with his own hands. Wealth would not raise a man much above his fellows, and there are indeed no means of employing it except in supplying a house with what would be thought in England indispensable comforts. Wealth, therefore, is not greatly coveted (although the Icelander likes a good bargain, especially in horseflesh), and an air of cheerful contentment reigns. The farm servant scarcely differs from the farmer, and probably, if a steady fellow, ends by marrying the farmer's daughter and getting a farm himself.[1] There is no title of respect, save Herra to the bishop and Sira to a priest; not even such a title as Mr. or Mrs., or Esquire. If you go to call for a lady you tap at the door and ask if Ingibjorg

[1] Crime is all but unknown; and though they have built a new prison at Reykjavík, I could not hear that there was any prospect of inmates, and should certainly, on our promised next visit, apply for lodgings there, as it is the only stone house in the place, except the Governor's, and occupies the finest site.

or Valgerðr is in; or, if you wish to give her her full name, Ingibjorg Thorvaldsdottir, or Eiriksdottir, or Bjarnardottir (as the case may be), for there is no title of politeness to apply. Her name, moreover, is her own name, unchanged from birth to death; for as there are no surnames or family names among the Icelanders,[1] but only Christian names, there is no reason for a wife assuming her husband's name, and she is Thorvaldsdottir after her marriage with Guðmundr just as before, while her children are Guðmundsson and Guðmundsdottir. When such a concession is made to the rights of women, it is a little surprising to find that she is in any other respect treated as an inferior, not usually sitting down to table with the men of the family, but waiting on them, and dining separately. Otherwise, however, women seem sufficiently well off, having full rights of property, and riding valorously about the country wherever they will; and we could not hear that there was any movement for their emancipation, or indeed for social reform of any kind, though, to be sure, imperfect knowledge of the language restricted our inquiries. In one regard the women of Iceland have obtained a completer equality than their sisters in continental Europe. They receive exactly the same education as the

[1] Some few families have adopted the Danish fashion of a surname; but this practice, which is quite an innovation, is said to be already declining.

men do. As there are naturally no schools in the island, families live mostly a dozen miles apart; and instruction is therefore given by the father to his sons and daughters alike and together, the priest[1]—where there is a priest—sometimes adding a little Latin or Danish. Thus the girl learns all her parents can teach her, and is as good an arithmetician, and as familiar with the Sagas, as her brothers. Accomplishments, of course, are pretty well out of the question: painting, not only from the difficulty of procuring the materials, but because there is really nothing to paint; dancing, because you can seldom gather a sufficiently large party, and have no rooms big enough; instrumental music, on account of the impossibility of transporting a piano over rocks and bogs on the back of a pony. Nevertheless, we found in a remote house (a good wooden house, by the way) upon the coast, where we were hospitably entertained for a day and night, not only a piano, but several young ladies who could play excellently on it and a guitar, accompanying themselves to songs in four or five languages, the Swedish, as we thought, the prettiest of all. They lived in the most desolate spot imaginable

[1] The Icelandic clergyman is always called a priest, but although he officiates in a variety of parti-coloured vestments, and the service is styled the mass, the country is nevertheless strenuously Lutheran, at least legally, for the penal laws forbidding Roman Catholics even to land in the island are in full force, and there are no dissenters.

—the sea roaring in front on a long strand; inland, a plain of dreary bog, and behind it, miles away, grim shapeless mountains. They had no neighbours within ten or fifteen miles, and told us they were often without a visitor for months together. But they were as bright and cheerful as possible; and though they did not respond to the suggestion of a dance, they sang and played to two of us all evening long in the tiny drawing-room, while the storm howled without; and their worthy father (who was a sort of general merchant for that part of the island), and the lord-lieutenant of the county, who had dropped in from his house thirty or forty miles off, brewed noble bowls of punch, and held forth to our third comrade, in a strange mixture of tongues, upon the resources of Iceland, and the prospects of opening, by means of British capital, a flourishing trade in sulphur.

Speaking of schools, it would not do to pass over the single educational institution which Iceland possesses, and which is school, college, university, all in one, viz. the *Schola Latina* at Reykjavík. It has usually fifty or sixty students, who come from every corner of the country, and counts among its teachers, present as well as past, several men of considerable literary and philological eminence. Its influence on the country through the priests, whom it trains and scatters forth, has been wonderful. It has

restored the purity of the language, which had suffered from Danish corruptions, has given a great stimulus to literary activity, has created a strong and united national party whose efforts have extracted from Denmark the repeal of the old oppressive laws, and forced her at last in this very spring (1872) to grant a constitution which, if not all that could be desired, is nevertheless an important concession to the wishes of the people. Several of these teachers have in their private capacity rendered good service by editing and printing old Icelandic books; another at great labour prepared from his own survey an excellent map of the island. They are always ready to welcome strangers, and grant them free use of their valuable library; their presence gives Reykjavík society a learned and literary character, which is the last thing you would look for in such a cluster of wooden shanties.

As for society, it must not be imagined that there is any society in Iceland in the same sense as in England or America. Except at weddings or funerals there are no social gatherings; even in the town an entertainment is the rarest thing in the world, and in the country it is impossible. There are no "county people," no "best sets," and hence no struggles to get into them. But there is not only a great deal of practical hospitality, everybody staying as a matter of course at everybody else's house, but a very

generous spirit shown in giving it. This is one of the things which one most enjoys in travelling there, and which atones for many discomforts. Everywhere you meet a hearty welcome; all that the house affords is set before you, the best room is at your service, and what is done, be it great or little, is done in an ungrudging spirit, and with genuine kindliness of manner. In fact, the strongest impression which we carried away, after that of the grimness of the scenery, was that of the geniality of the people, and the pleasant sense of a social equality which involves no obtrusive self-assertion by the poorer, since it is the natural result of the conditions under which life goes on.

Hospitality, it may be said, is natural enough in a wilderness where the least engaging stranger brings news, and varies somehow the intense monotony of life. But in Iceland, as nothing ever happens, there can hardly be even news to bring, except round the coast, where the expected arrival of a ship is a great event; and the people have singularly little curiosity about other countries. The two newspapers (to which I believe a third has since been added) contained only the most trivial local incidents and reflections on the Danish Government. Nobody (except of course those few who had themselves travelled) inquired what was passing in the great world of Europe. Some had just heard

of the fall of Louis Napoleon two years before; but not a question was put as to the war or its results on France, and when one volunteered remarks they excited no interest. Once or twice I was asked whether London was not a large town, and if I had seen when in America the Icelandic colony at Milwaukee, but here curiosity about foreign countries stopped. The fact was that they did not know enough about the phenomena of the world outside to know what to ask about it; while, as to its politics or social or literary movements, they felt that nothing that happened there would or could make any difference to them. To them at least what the French call the "solidarity of the peoples" has not any meaning or application. No political revolution, no ascendancy of democracy or imperialism, no revival or decay of literature or art, no scientific invention, will substantially affect their lives. Steam and the telegraph have done nothing for them, for there is not a steam-engine or galvanic battery in the country; and though a steamboat visits them six times a year, trade is not more brisk than in the old days. Even those discoveries which seem of the most universal utility, discoveries in medicine and surgery, are practically useless to them, who have but one doctor.[1]

[1] He is a very delightful and energetic old doctor, who travels up and down constantly, trying to diffuse sound ideas regarding health; but no one man can do much in such an area.

And this is the third and last of the dominant impressions which one receives in Iceland—an impression of utter isolation and detachment from the progress of the world; stronger here than in the remotest wilds of America, because it is an old country, because its inhabitants are civilised, and because you know that whichever way the currents of trade and population may flow, they will never turn hither. The farmer of the interior of Iceland, or the north-west coast, lives on and is clothed by the produce of his own hillside, reads only his own language, hears of the great world but once or twice a year: what do its excitements and changes signify to him? What can they signify even to his late descendants? Human life is reduced to its simplest elements; and one feels how permanent those elements are, and how small a part man plays in the order of things. Nature confronts him, strong, inexorable, always the same; and he remains the same because unable to resist her. It is not wholly, it is not even chiefly, a dismal feeling, this sense of isolation and stillness in Icelandic life. The traveller enjoys for himself the most absolute immunity from the interruptions of his usual interests and duties that can be imagined, for no news from Europe can reach him; he may be offered a seat in the Cabinet, or accused of forgery, or portrayed in *Vanity Fair* — he will know

nothing about it till his return. And he sees that the native Icelander, if he wants some of those requisites for the enjoyment of life which custom has made us expect, wants also many of the fountains of bitterness which spring up in a highly civilised society, and possesses all that philosophy can admit to be necessary for happiness. Comfort he has never known, and therefore does not miss; and he has the primal human affections, healthful and useful labour, books to ennoble his life by connecting him with the past and the future, the changing seasons, clouds and the colours of sunset, and, most of all, calm and the freedom from temptations—*secura quies et nescia fallere vita.* When the first Norwegians came to Iceland, driven forth by the conquests of Harold the Fair-haired, they found it already inhabited by a few saintly Irish hermits, who soon disappeared before the intruders. It is still a place to be commended to those who are tired of the giddy world and would give themselves to meditation upon everlasting problems.

These wandering reminiscences have rambled on further than was intended, yet many things have been passed over which it would have been pleasant to speak of—whimsical incidents of travel, curious little bits of ancient usage, such as the institution of parish arbitrators to whom a dispute must be submitted before it

turns to a law-suit; instances of the friendly warmth with which the people are ready to receive strangers who do not give themselves airs, and which culminated in a farewell entertainment, at which the health of the departing visitors was proposed by a dear old friend, in a long Latin speech, with an eloquence and command of Ciceronianisms that put the answerer to shame. Enjoyable, however, heartily enjoyable, as we found our two months there, I cannot say that other travellers would, any more than I can feel sure that the views and sentiments I have tried to express are those which the aspect of the country and people will suggest to others. Even in our little party there were those who balanced very differently the pleasures and the miseries of our lot, and opinions diverged upon all sorts of Icelandic questions; one, for instance, maintaining the Icelanders to be an exceptionally religious people; a second, exceptionally unreligious; while the third thought them neither more nor less religious than the rest of the world. (Each still holds to his own view, so I commend the matter to the next traveller.) On the whole, our conclusion was that tourists, even those who are tired of Alps and Pyrenees, ought not to be advised to visit Iceland, unless they either are interested in Scandinavian literature and history, or belong to that happy

and youthful class which enjoys a rough life for its own sake. Life in Iceland is certainly very rough, and if it may strengthen the strong, it tries too severely the weak. But he who does not fear hardships, and penetrates the desert interior, or coasts the wild north-west, may rest assured that he will find a new delight in the study of the ancient literature of the island, and of the island itself will carry away an ineffaceable impression. Ineffaceable, not only because it is peculiar, but because it is so simple; for as respects nature, it is the impression of an unchangeable present; as respects man, of an unreturning past. Iceland had a glorious dawn, and has lain in twilight ever since; it is hardly possible that she should again be called on to play a part in European history. But the brightness of that dawn can never fade entirely from her hills, or cease to ennoble the humble lives of her people.

THE TÁTRA

1. The Mountains of Poland, 1878

This chapter describes a journey through the mountain land on the borders of Poland and Hungary in 1878, written at the time, and published soon afterwards in the *Cornhill Magazine*, then edited by my friend Leslie Stephen. Great changes have happened since then. Poland has recovered her ancient place as an independent State, and now includes Galicia, which in 1878 was a province of the—now extinct—Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Hungary, cut down to half its former size by the Treaty of Trianon, forcibly imposed upon her in 1920, no longer includes the southern slopes of the aforesaid mountain land, then called the county of Zips, for this district has now by the same treaty been allotted to the new republic of Czecho-Slovakia. I have, however, allowed the article to stand substantially as first written, thinking that the reader of to-day may like to know what were the conditions of travel and local life in these regions at a time when they were much less visited by strangers than they have been in recent years.

As I have never visited Poland nor Northern Hungary since 1878, I could not describe them as they are now. There were then no visible signs of agitation against Austrian rule in Galicia, nor were any apparent among the Slovaks of Northern Hungary.

Poland is the last country to which one would think of going for mountain scenery. North Germany is flat enough, but it has at least the Hartz. Russia is one vast level; yet Russia is at least bounded on the east by the long range of the Urals, and on the south by the towering masses of the Caucasus. But Poland suggests only boundless plains and monotonous forests, muddy rivers winding slowly through long tracts of marsh into a shallow sea. Such romance as the name evokes has been derived, not from any beauties of nature, but from its history. We think of the unconquerable spirit with which its people bore their political calamities, clinging to their national traditions, rising again and again in revolt against the harsh rule of Tsars, exiles perishing in remote Siberian mines, bands of insurgents eluding the pursuit of Russian columns in the depths of trackless woods.

Nevertheless, Poland has a mountain region of which she may be proud, and Calderon was justified when he placed the scene of one of his finest dramas *Life's a Dream* (*La Vida es sueno*)

in its mountains. Poland, that is, of course, the old Kingdom of Poland which included Galicia, was bounded on the south, and the old Kingdom of Hungary was bounded on the north and east by a long line of high land to which systematic geographers gave the name of the Carpathian range. This name, taken as a general description, seems to be an invention of geographical writers, for there is only one small group of hills to which the name Krapah was locally applied. They had, however, to find some general name, and this was as good as any other, so it established itself on the maps as denoting the long line of elevated, forest-covered ground which extends from the head waters of the river Waag as far as the valley of Hatzek in Western Transylvania. In this long line there are two points at which the hills rise into real mountains, high and bold. One is along the frontier line which divides Transylvania from Moldavia on the east, from Wallachia on the south. Here are several noble peaks reaching from five to six thousand feet, two of which I have climbed, but which I will not stop to describe. The other point lies about seventy miles to the S.S.W. of Krakow, and to the north of the Hungarian city of Kassatt (Kaschau). Here there is a group or series of steep and lofty granite peaks lying in a sort of range from east to west which the natives call by the Slavonic name of Tátra. This mountain

mass—which contains in a small area a great variety of scenery, and an extraordinary number of interesting peaks, lakes, and valleys—is most easily reached from the south, where a railway skirts it. But a much more interesting approach is from the north or Polish side, through the grand old city of Krakow.

Krakow is so little visited by Englishmen—so very little that when an unmistakable stranger is seen in the streets, conjecture can assign him no origin more distant than Berlin—that some account of it may not be unwelcome. It has that slightly melancholy interest which belongs to cities of which Damascus, Syracuse, Granada, Trebizond, Toledo, Venice, Trondhjem, Florence, Cuzco, and Kiev are examples, cities that have once been, but are no longer, capitals of independent States.[1] Such cities have about them a twofold attraction. They have that air of having seen better days, of having enjoyed a pomp and power that have departed, which lends dignity even to commonplace externals, and gives an interest to what might otherwise be mean. The fragrance of autumn, with its sometimes subtle charm of decay, hangs round them. And the very fact that their growth has usually been checked when, or soon after, they reached their

[1] One can hardly include Edinburgh, because it is now great by industry and commerce, as well as by history; nor Dumbarton, because it is more populous and flourishing than when it was the capital of Strathclyde; nor Dublin, because it hopes to recover the status of a capital.

meridian, has enabled them to preserve many traces of antiquity, which, in more prosperous towns, where old buildings are destroyed to make way for new, would have long since perished. In a city like Milan or Cologne every fourth or fifth generation pulls down the dwellings, the warehouses, possibly even the churches of its forefathers, to erect bigger or more commodious ones in their stead. This has happened on a great scale in Paris and London. But Krakow, like most of those sister cities just referred to, lost her position as a capital quite suddenly, and has since then been nothing more than a provincial centre, a sort of magnified county town, with few industries and only a moderate trade. Hence the old things have stood; and though, to be sure, private houses have been modernised, still the antique character of the place has suffered very little.

Thus Krakow is the most distinctively Polish city in all the region which once was Poland. Warsaw is a recent and upstart place by comparison. It did not become the seat of government till the seventeenth century, and of late years has been to some extent Russified. But the older city is still thoroughly national. The Polish language is the official speech; the traditions of the departed monarchy cling round the Cathedral where the national heroes lie buried, and the Castle where the kings of the older dynasties held their barbaric feasts.

The city lies near the southern edge of the vast plain of Middle Europe, that stretches all the way northward to the Baltic, and eastward to the Ural Mountains. On the south the country, at first gently undulating, rises by degrees into high hills, whose tops, some twenty or thirty miles distant, give a blue background to the landscape. It is a well-cultivated country, with patches of forest here and there, but, in the main, of open arable and pasture land, dotted over with frequent villages. Through the plain, and just washing the city, flows the broad and sluggish Vistula, its waters too turbid for beauty, too shallow for much navigation, but still with an air of dignity about it not unworthy of the national river of Poland. Within, the aspect of the city is curiously different from that of the German towns which the traveller has lately left. The streets are wider and more straight, and in the centre there is a great open square somewhat like the Maidan of the East, or what is called in Irish towns the Diamond, where fairs are held, and round which the best shops and the chief cafés are planted. The houses are tall and solid; some of them look as if they had been, and indeed they probably were, the palaces of that turbulent old nobility whose descendants have now been reduced to poverty, or are cherishing in a hopeless exile their memories of departed greatness. The hotel in which we stayed was one of these—a tall pile with walls thick enough

for a mediæval castle, broad stone staircases, a great gallery running on each floor round a court-yard, and lofty chambers in which one felt lost at night. The churches, whose bells clang without ceasing, have the same air of grand but somewhat ponderous gloom. Architecturally they are not very striking, and more interesting from the beautiful glass and the wood-carvings which one or two of them contain than from any peculiarities of their style, which is that of East Germany. One has frequent occasion to remark in these countries how much more in the Middle Ages the influence of religion counted than did the sympathies of race. As Catholics who had got their Christianity from Rome and the West, the Slavonic Poles, like the Slavonic Czechs, looked always towards the West, and were in intimate ecclesiastical as well as political relations not only with Rome but also with Germany and Hungary. They were, indeed, for a long time dependent on the Romano-Germanic Empire. Their fourteenth- and fifteenth-century churches, therefore, are of a Germanic type, and were probably designed by German builders; while their racial kinsfolk, the Slavonic Russians, having been converted by missionaries of the Orthodox Eastern Church, belonged to an utterly different sphere, and followed the models of Constantinople in architecture and art as well as in discipline and ritual.

The Cathedral of Krakow (which has been

the seat of an archbishop for many centuries) stands on the only height in the city—a steep bluff overlooking the Vistula, and commanding a splendid prospect to the north and east along its winding shores. This bluff was probably the first inhabited part of the city, and very likely the fortified kernel round which it grew up. It is, in fact, an acropolis, well placed both for defence and to command the navigation of the river. The top of the hill is covered by the palace of the kings, a huge but rather ugly mass of buildings, no part of which looks older than the sixteenth century, while most of it is evidently later. It has now been turned into a barrack, and its dull stuccoed courts and interminable galleries were in 1878 full of white-coated soldiers lounging about and chattering in all the tongues which an Austrian army speaks. Close to the palace, and squeezed in between it and the edge of the abrupt hill-slope, is the Cathedral. It is a small church, which would go inside the nave of York Minster, and its exterior is ungainly. But its historical associations more than make up for any want of visible majesty. It teems with monuments that call up the most famous names and striking incidents in the long story of Poland's greatness and decay. It is the Westminster Abbey of the Polish people. The high altar is adorned by a sumptuous silver shrine, under which rest the bones of St. Stanislas, the martyred

patron saint of the nation, who was Bishop of Krakow, and slain by a ferocious king in the eleventh century. The chapels on both sides were most of them erected by one or other of the great families, and contain busts of them and pictures representing famous scenes in Polish history. One has a superb figure of *Christ* by Thorwaldsen. In the crypt beneath, to which one descends a staircase whose top is covered with a brazen trap-door, are the tombs of the kings, their wives, and children. One is led with flickering candles through a labyrinth of chilly vaults, and faintly discerns amid the gloom the huge sarcophagi within which lie the bones of forgotten potentates — potentates whose very names the western traveller has scarcely heard, but who ruled a kingdom larger than France, a kingdom that stretched from the Oder to the Dnieper. The earlier tombs, beginning from the twelfth century, are rude, and all are plain and massive. Only two uncrowned heroes have been admitted into this royal sepulchre, the last two heroes of the nation—and are they to be its last?—Kosciuszko and Poniatowski. They lie in the central vault on either side of the coffin of John Sobieski. But the spot in the church which speaks most of all to a Polish heart is the main chapel of the choir immediately behind the altar of St. Stanislas. Here Polish sovereigns were crowned from the first building of the Cathedral

down till the melancholy end. Here are set, facing each other, two chairs of State. The one is the archiepiscopal chair of Krakow; the other is the throne of the King of Poland, the throne that has so long stood empty, and is never to be filled again. The gilding is tarnished; the dust lies thick upon the faded red silk that covers it. In this bare and silent chapel, which once echoed to the shouts of the assembled nobles, it is a pathetic emblem of the extinction of a powerful kingdom and the enslavement of a gifted people.

There are not many sights in Krakow; and if there were, I should not attempt to describe them, since nothing is more tedious than a guidebook-like enumeration of details. Still, the Jewish town ought to be mentioned, for the Jews are the most striking feature in the population of the city. They were, as old writers say, brought hither by King Casimir the Great in the fourteenth century and settled in the suburb, which they still inhabit, and which is called from him the Casimir city. It is altogether unlike the inner city, the streets wider, the houses comparatively low and mean, and an indescribable air of dirt and squalor pervading everything. There is an immense bustle of buying and selling going on—a sort of perpetual Rag Fair—chiefly in wearing apparel, but also in all sorts of articles of domestic utility, furniture, pots and pans, shovels and gridirons, pottery (all cheap and ugly), and small groceries.

The dealers mostly stand outside their doors, where indeed the greater part of the wares are displayed, and solicit the passer-by in Polish, Yiddish, or, more rarely, German. There are altogether in Krakow, whose total population amounts to 40,000, over 12,000 Jews. The great majority are Orthodox or Rabbinical, and are mostly distinguishable by their long straight coats of cloth or alpaca, coming almost to the ankles, tall and narrow-brimmed hats, and little wispy curls on either side of the face. Such a hideous dress creates against them a prejudice which is in large measure unjust, for they are a valuable element in the population, and get on better with the Christians than is the case in Western Russia, or even in Germany. A few have begun to drop the peculiar dress with the strict observance of the Law, and these may before long be absorbed in the body of the Polish nation. Though the race would seem to have kept pretty much to itself for many centuries, there is a great diversity of complexion among these Jews. Many are fair in face, with sandy hair; but the characteristic features are seldom absent. In Poland, as elsewhere, they are townsfolk, with all the minor traffic in their hands, and never settling down to till the soil; and their bustling activity makes them seem even more numerous in Krakow than they really are, so that a stranger might fancy it a Jewish city. It is by no means

stagnant or decaying, for the converging railways and its position in a fertile country make it a place of considerable trade. But this hardly qualifies the air of melancholy that broods over it. The Poles are by nature, like their nearest relatives the Czechs, a bright and vivacious people. Those who know the Slavonic race best generally agree in holding them to be one of its most highly gifted branches. And here in Galicia they do not seem to have much misgovernment to complain of, nor perhaps anything more than the pedantry, formalism, and backwardness which characterise Austrian rule everywhere. The Polish tongue reigns, and Poles are freely admitted to the best posts under Government which industry and talent can win. Nevertheless, the sense of the calamitous, of the downfall of their monarchy, and the apparently destined extinction of their nationality, seems to lie like a load upon their souls. Krakow, with its grand old houses, its picturesque crowds, its pleasant gardens engirdling the houses, its bells chiming ceaselessly in the clear summer air, is, withal, a place of sadness.

There are two excursions which every visitor is expected to take, on pain of being regarded as unmindful of national feeling. The first is to the Hill of Kosciuszko, and it has the merit of being short and easy. Three steep mounds or hills rise from the plain near the city: one is

called the Krakus Hill, from a mythical Krakus who slew dragons and gave his name to the town; another is named from some female heroine of legend; and the third, which lies about two miles off, has received its name from a lofty mound of earth which was heaped up on its summit in honour of the patriot after his death. Nobles, burghers, ladies, laboured with their own hands in piling it up; bags and baskets filled with earth were brought from every part of the dominions of the ancient Polish kingdom to be added to the heap; and thus it was raised in a steep grass-covered cone to a height of about eighty feet above the top of the natural eminence. It is approached through the strong walls of the fort which crowns the hill—one of several that protect Krakow—and thence spiral paths lead to the top, where there has been placed a huge boulder of gneiss with the single word "Kosciuszkow" carved upon it. The prospect is magnificent; and most so at sunset, when we saw it, blue ridges rising one behind another to the south, the towers and spires of the city glittering under the dying light, and the smooth stream winding through gardens and hamlets and happy autumn fields till it is lost beyond the Russian frontier in the boundless plain. Looking over that plain, looking from the stone inscribed with Kosciuszko's name, over the country for which he and so many others bled in vain—yet not altogether in vain,

for their memory has been an inspiration—one is reminded of the Greek saying that the whole earth is the tomb of famous men, and understands the feeling which planted on this commanding height so noble and so simple a monument to the last hero of the nation.

The other expedition that must be made from Krakow is to those enormous salt-mines, stretching over, or rather under, many miles of land, by which it chiefly used to be known to the world at large. They are at a place called Wielicza, about seven miles from the city. Having seen many salt-mines before, having been heartily bored by them, and being, moreover, of an indolent turn of mind, I at first refused to go. However, I was blessed with the company of two energetic friends, one of whom had an eye which, after having seen most things in Europe and Asia, yet was not satisfied with seeing. He represented that it is presumptuous for an individual traveller to attempt to be wiser than the rest of the world, who have agreed that certain sights must be seen, and he clinched his arguments by declaring that anyhow he would go himself. Knowing how defenceless is the position of a man who has not seen what his companions have seen, I submitted forthwith. And he proved to be right, for the mines are well worth visiting. Not that there is anything of special interest either in the geological or mineralogical way, or in the science of mining; at least,

if there is, we were not shown it. But some of the effects are wonderfully fine. Visitors are admitted on two days in each week, and then in a large party, thirty or forty at least, a pretty heavy charge being made for the illuminations. After descending some four hundred feet, the visitor is led through long dark passages from one huge vaulted hall to another; sometimes looking up from beneath to a roof almost lost in gloom, again looking down from an aperture near the top of one of these chambers upon lamps glittering faintly far below. In several of the largest halls Bengal lights are burnt and rockets let off—a cockneyfied sort of thing, one may say; but when one of these vast caverns suddenly starts into full light, and its countless crystals flash upon you from walls and roof, the imagination is touched in no common way. You think of the Hall of Eblis in *Vathek*; or those subterranean palaces of the *Arabian Nights* where the treasures of the Jinn lie concealed; or Virgil's vaguely grand descriptions of the nether world. At one point the low dark corridor emerges on the edge of a deep pool, where a barge lies which takes on board a few passengers, and moves silently with them across the black water and under an arch of rock into a second pool, till the lights and voices are almost lost in the distance. It was Charon and the Styx to the life—if one can talk of life in such a connection.

He who would reach the high mountains from Krakow has two courses open to him. He may go by railway, making a circuit of a whole day's journey by way of Oderberg to reach their south-western foot; or he may hire a vehicle, and, after driving for a long day and a half, find himself at their northern base. Wishing to see something of Galician country we chose the latter plan, sending round our baggage by train, and retaining only such light articles as could be carried over the mountains. The vehicle we procured was the usual peasant's waggon of Central Europe, such as I had travelled in through Transylvania twelve years before with Leslie Stephen. It is a long, low, narrow, springless cart, with low wattled sides and four small wheels, sometimes having a kind of framework over it, by which one can cover the top and sides with canvas, and so obtain some protection against both sun and rain. The inside is filled with hay, reclining upon which the traveller suffers less than might be expected from the bumping and jolting. One of us sat beside the driver on a board fixed across the cart; the other two ensconced themselves behind in the hay; while at the tail-end of all was placed the baggage. Two horses are harnessed to this contrivance with some bits of rotten rope, which require mending every hour or two; and with much noise and shaking one accomplishes, on level ground, about four or even

perhaps five miles an hour. Such a kind of locomotion, trying to the vertebræ on a long journey, is quite endurable for a day and a half, and has, withal, so much of "local colour" about it that one feels bound not to complain of the discomfort. It cannot, however, be recommended for invalids or ladies.

We set off at half-past 5 A.M. in a fog so dense that we narrowly escaped several collisions with other waggons which were coming in to market in a long string; nor did the sun shine out till, about half-past seven o'clock, we reached the first halting-place, a village nine miles from Krakow. As the same horses are taken all the way, frequent stoppages to give them rest and food are necessary; nor is the traveller sorry to stretch his legs and ramble round among the peasants' houses. We had by this time entered a wholly different country—a country of steep though not high hills, bright pastures interspersed with woods and frequent villages. It reminded us of the lower parts of the Yorkshire fells, or of the outskirts of the Scottish highlands, with grass just as green, and a profusion, even in August, of ferns and wild flowers. The roads were covered with gaily dressed peasants wending their way to church or market, some in waggons like our own, but the greater number in long processions thirty or forty strong, which walked slowly along in loose array, generally preceded by a priest or two

with attendants carrying banners. Many were singing; and the sound of the hymns rising through the still air, and often heard before the companies came in sight, lent an additional charm to the scene. Towards noon we rattled into the market-place of the town, where our driver meant to take his mid-day halt. It is called Myslenica — a straggling place of perhaps two thousand souls, built, like all Polish villages, round a big, irregular, open space, which seems the larger because the houses are so low. The whole population of the district seemed to have poured in. The large church was crowded to suffocation; and in the walled enclosure which surrounded it hundreds were sitting on the grass, the men on one side, the women and children on another, waiting till their turn should come to enter; some praying or reading their books of devotion, and all perfectly still and silent. Such a picture of fervent worship we had never seen, and I doubt if even Ireland is so profoundly and earnestly Catholic as Galicia. The shrines and crosses along the roads are more numerous than anywhere else in Europe—certainly more so than in Spain, Southern Italy, or even Tyrol—and nobody passes the smallest of them without taking off his hat. It was pleasant to notice how well these simple peasants were dressed, how happy and cheerful they looked. Their houses, though rough enough, are not squalid; there is an air of primitive

comfort. The impression of melancholy one gets in Krakow is not felt in the country parts of Galicia, where the peasantry are as well off as they have ever been, and far better than they were in the not very distant days of serfdom. Now they have fixity of tenure and immunity from forced labour. Politics they never knew nor cared about, for all the Polish risings were the work of the nobles and the townsfolk. Even in Russian Poland the peasants took but little part in the last two struggles; and, as everybody knows, they were sometimes actually hostile to the insurgents. They are a good-looking people, these Galicians, the men tall and well made; the women with plenty of colour and fine eyes—though the hard toil of the field soon tells upon them—and their looks are set off by a picturesque costume, gaily striped petticoats, with bright red or blue handkerchiefs tied over the head. We wondered to see no Jewish faces, and fancied there might be none; but, stumbling upon a school full of Jewish boys, perceived that here, too, the Jewish element was present, though, of course, it did not figure in the crowd of Sunday church-goers.

The road southward from Myslenica ran through a country of higher hills and narrower dales, following the course of a rapid mountain stream till at last we reached a steep acclivity, and a long slow ascent brought us about four

o'clock to the top of a ridge nearly three thousand feet above the sea, from which the main range of the Polish mountains—or, to call them by their proper name, the Tátra—revealed itself in all its grandeur. Some twenty miles off, as the crow flies, beyond lower hills and a wide valley, rose a line of steep, rocky peaks, their lower slopes covered with dense forest, their upper zone flecked with patches of snow, and showing against the sky a crest of jagged rock-teeth, which now and then towered up into some great pinnacle. This mass is the Tátra, which we had come so many hundred miles to explore. Even less eager mountaineers might have rejoiced at such a tempting prospect of glens, crags, arêtes, and soaring summits, everything, in fact, except glaciers that a climber could desire. There are lakes too, and plenty of them—lakes of exquisitely bright colours, lying under the shadow of great granite precipices; but these do not appear in a distant view, so deeply sunk are they in the upper hollows of the vales. Following the mountain line to the west, we saw it decline into mountains still of considerable height, but far less rocky and savage in their character than the mass in front, which trended away as far as the eye could follow. Eastward there were clouds, and we could make out nothing.

From this specular mount we descended over many lesser ridges, which the road climbed

straight up and down, into the valley of the river Dunajecs, and long after dark reached the town of Nowy Targ (New Market). Though one pair of horses had done over fifty miles in the day, and climbed many thousands of feet in these tremendous ups and downs, they had a good trot left in them at the last and wanted no whipping. Like nearly all the inns in Poland, the inn at New Market is kept by a Jew. Good it was not, but the wonder rather is that in such an out-of-the-way place there should be a passable inn at all. It was certainly better than one would have found in a town of the same size in Russia, of which country we were reminded when, on being asked for tea, they brought an enormous brazen urn, the well-known Russian samovar.

Nowy Targ is a good sample of the Polish country town. It has a great, open, ragged-looking space in the middle, called the Runek, where rubbish is thrown, and empty waggons stand, and booths are set up. Round this there are houses of one or two stories high, built of brick and white-washed, mostly taverns and general stores kept by Jews, as one could tell from the names over them, which are usually German and refer in some way to the precious metals — Goldenberg, Silbermann, Goldzieher, and so forth. All the other houses in the place were of wood, and many of them little better than shanties, built quite irregularly outside the square,

and rambling off into the country. There was nothing to detain the traveller in such a place, where even the church, a big, ugly modern building, had nothing to show, so we pressed on next morning to the mountains that rose like a wall to the south. The way leads over a stretch of level land, cultivated in long narrow strips, which are separated by neither wall nor hedge nor fence, and belong, as far as we could make out, to the peasants, who hold them on a sort of communal system, having the pastures in common and these patches in severalty. The commonest crops are oats, rye, hemp, flax, buckwheat, beet-root, and potatoes. An odd result of the absence of fences is that when a cow or sheep is turned out to graze on a bit of grass land, it has to be watched to keep it from browsing on the crops. So every here and there you see a man or a boy holding the end of a rope to which is fastened a grazing cow, pretty strong evidence that wages must be low and labour plentiful in a land where a man's time is of no more value than a cow's feeding. Up here the population seems as large as in the country round Krakow, but the villages are rougher. All the houses are of unhewn logs, with the interstices stuffed with moss or mud. Even in a large hamlet they are not built in regular lanes, but stand at all angles, each dwelling having its hay-house and its cow-house beside it, and sometimes a tiny garden, that is to

say, two or three yards of ground wattled in, with a rowan bush, a tansy, and a poppy growing inside. The people are better looking than round Krakow, but the men handsomer than the women. The former have good bold features, and especially well-formed noses; the women have little to attract except freshness of colour and a simple frank expression. As one usually finds among hard-worked rustics, the children are prettier than their elders. Both hair and eyes are oftener light than dark. Everybody wears a white or grey woollen coat or tunic, and over it a short sleeveless sheepskin jacket; it is rare to see the big sheepskin overall in which the Russian peasant seems to pass his whole life. Many were the questions we longed to ask as to the circumstances of peasant life; but, unluckily, we were quite cut off from communication not only with the villagers, but even with our driver, who knew not a word of German or of anything but his native Polish. He was a strange wild creature, tall, stalwart, and handsome, with bold features, dark hair hanging in long locks round his cheeks, and an expression like that of a startled fawn. Not that I can remember ever to have seen a startled fawn; however, his expression was just that which the startled fawn is supposed to wear. Like a true child of nature, he could not be got to comprehend that we did not understand his Polish; and whenever we motioned to him to stop

or go on, or pointed to the hay and made signs that we wanted it shaken up again to make a comfortable seat, he went off in a flood of words, and, when he saw, after explaining everything, that no impression had been made on our minds, he gazed at us more wildly than ever out of his fine eyes, tossed his head with a kind of sigh, shook his reins, and called to the horses, which, at any rate, understood him. Every traveller notes how hard it is for any but the fully civilised people to realise that what is so easy to them as speaking their own language, should be impossible to others. The last trace of the phenomenon may be found in the disposition a man has to raise his voice in talking his own tongue to a native, which one remarks so often in the English or American tourist in Continental Europe, who unconsciously forgets that it is not the hearing ear but the understanding mind that is at fault. This poor driver of ours was, withal, a sensitive creature. One of us had, while filling a pipe, given him some tobacco, and, liking it better than his own, he every time thereafter held out his pipe to us for a further supply. When this had gone on all day, another of the party, getting a bit tired, demurred to the repeated request. The Pole's face darkened; he turned away in high dudgeon; and we had to press tobacco on him for ten minutes before he would be appeased to accept it.

After driving four or five hours from Nowy

Targ over the nearly level floor of the valley, we reached in the afternoon the foot of the hills and the edge of the great pine forest that clothes them. Turning up a narrow road, black with cinders, which led through the pines, we entered a glen, passed several iron forges, and came at no great distance to the little village of Zakopane, where our journey by cart ended, and which, as the tourist's best headquarters in the Polish mountains, merits a more particular description.

Zakopane is the general name of a village or commune, which consists of several hamlets lying scattered over a large area, and resorted to for the mineral springs which rise out of the limestone rock. The best placed of these, and the one to which we had therefore come, is called the Iron-work, or sometimes the Hammer.[1] It stands near the mouth of a glen, some five or six miles long, which runs due north from the axis of the range that divides Galicia from Hungary. On each side are steep mountains, covered below with forest, and at the top breaking into picturesque crags of limestone. Down the middle runs a foaming stream of exquisitely clear green water, and behind, at the head of the valley, great peaks rise up against the brilliant southern sky. The hamlet consists of a row of iron forges, with some cabins for the workers beside them, a miniature

[1] The name is sometimes used in Southern England for the place in which iron extracted from the local rocks used to be worked, as, for instance, Abinger Hammer near Shere in Surrey.

bathing-house, an inn, a few primitive lodging-houses, and the residence of the Prussian baron who has lately bought this property, and is now working the forges. His Schloss, as it is so grandly called, is a large villa cottage, more like an Indian bungalow than a castle, with a pleasant flower-garden in front, which the baron, who is a genial, active, practical man, throws open to the use of visitors. He lives here himself all the summer months, makes the acquaintance of travellers, and has done a good deal for the neighbourhood in more ways than one. Capital is sorely wanted in Galicia; and, unpopular though the Germans generally are among their Slavonic neighbours, a Berlin capitalist who spends money in local improvements, and is a good fellow to boot, does not fail to be appreciated.

The inn is the centre of this odd little backwoods settlement. It is a one-storied building of stone, and, indeed, of very solid stone, standing on a high bank above the river, whose babble mingles with the thud of the forge hammers all night long. The bedrooms, six or eight in number, are all but absolutely bare of furniture, and a public one, where people "meal" (as the Americans say), and smoke, and talk, and play cards all the evening, is about sixteen feet square, and therefore a trifle small for the whole visiting population of the place, which

resorts to it for dinner and gossip every evening. For a wonder, it is not kept by a Jew. The landlord, a whimsical old fellow with blue spectacles, of which one glass was twice as blue as the other, was never tired of telling us that he was a Pole and no Jew, and dilating on the consequent superiority of his house to the Israelitish establishments in the other hamlets of Zakopane.[1] In his hands you are safe. There may be brigands about, but you need not fear them so long as you are under his protection. He flitted about in zig-zags like a dragon-fly, buzzing away in his talk, and continually summoning the overworked waiter to do this or that for the lordships from Berlin. (Any German-speaking stranger is put down to Berlin; and as we had not ourselves started the notion, so neither did we feel called upon to destroy it.) One of us mildly hinted a hope that the beds were clean. "Clean!" he screamed; "do you take me for a Jew? I cannot so much as endure a flea; no, not a flea; a single flea has before now driven me mad and kept me awake all night. Hasn't it driven me mad, quite mad?" apostrophising the scurrying waiter and the maid in the adjoining kitchen. Notwithstanding which assurance, some of the party had anything but good nights under this Christian roof.

[1] Similarly in Transylvania if you engage a Magyar driver, he begins by telling you that he is not a German, much less a Wallach, but a Magyar.

Towards sunset the guests, some of whom were bathing in the cold-water establishment, while others had merely come for an autumn holiday, used to gather from the little boxes in which they sleep to the dining-room of the inn; and here eating and talking and cards went on through half the night. Most of the visitors are Poles, either from Galicia or Russian Poland; a few Russians, a few Germans from Silesia or the Baltic provinces of Russia. Nearly every educated Pole talks some German, so the western traveller is not ill off for conversation. We had, however, more talk with the Germans, and amused ourselves by getting at their views of Polish men and things. I asked one of them, who had lived both in Hungary and Poland, and who, among other pieces of information, told me that the Hungarian language was Semitic, and greatly resembled Hebrew, how he liked the two nations. "I don't take to the Magyars much," he answered; "they are hard to get on with, thinking so highly of themselves and their country; but I like the Poles still less. It is a false people, a treacherous people, a people you cannot trust." It amused us to remember that this is the one reproach which every nation, whatever else it may say of them, is sure to bring against its neighbours. The Romans talked of *fides Punica*; the French talk of *perfide Albion*; the Turks say, "He lies like a Persian"; the Germans seldom speak of

their dealings with Frenchmen or Italians without a sneer at "Welsh falsehood" (Wälsche Untreue). Are we to suppose that each people does not quite understand how the mind of its neighbours works, and can account for the discrepancy between the sense in which it understands a promise and the way in which the promise is interpreted or performed by the other only as intentional fraud? Or is it that men are really less scrupulous, more disposed to take any advantage they can in dealing with foreign nations or with individual foreigners than with their own countryfolk? One who has had a good deal of experience of divers peoples is disposed to think that there is less difference than Europeans believe to exist in the matter of veracity, though I cannot go so far as a friend who, having been a judge in India and in Warwickshire, said he found that the parties to a suit perjured themselves as freely in Birmingham as in Bengal.

Society might grow monotonous to a Berliner or an Englishman in this little community; for, after all, most of us soon exhaust the topics of conversation with the ordinary casual acquaintance. But, fortunately, there are plenty of charming excursions close by, and the glen itself is so pretty that even to stroll round the village is a pleasure in fine weather. Fine weather is essential, for where a sitting-room is small and

the bedrooms damp—rain dripping through most of the ceilings—the greatest lover of solitude and the picturesque cannot hold out long against continued rain. It would be tedious to describe the drives and the more numerous walks which may be taken from this central spot; but a general idea may be given of the sort of scenery. The main granite axis of the short Tátra range runs nearly east and west, and forms the boundary between Galicia and Poland. From it there are thrown off a number of spurs or transverse ridges, running generally north, and separated by deep, narrow glens of from four to eight miles in length, opening out into that wide valley plain which I have already described. The glens and the hill-sides for a considerable height are clothed with thick pine woods. Above the pines are stretches of bright green pasture; and, highest of all, picturesque crags of limestone rise from these pastures into peaks some 6000 or 7000 feet above sea-level. As the whole country lies high—Zakopane itself in the valley is over 3000 feet above the sea—these heights are not great enough to make the scenery imposing. But nothing can in its way be more beautiful. The white cliffs contrast finely with the dark green woods; the valleys are made vocal by rushing foaming brooks; the woods themselves are full of a lovely undergrowth of ferns and shrubs, and here and there, where some great mural precipice

towers over the upper basin of a valley, the landscape rises to grandeur. It is a lovable sort of country—a country not on too vast a scale to be enjoyed in an easy fashion. The summits are neither too lofty nor too distant to be scaled in an afternoon by an active climber; the glens not too long to be thoroughly explored by a lady. Any one with something of an eye for country, and Professor Kolbenheyer's capital little handbook in his pocket, needs no guide. There are chamois among the higher rocks (though there are also game-laws to protect them), trout in the streams, and plenty of scarce plants. The botanist who clambers among the cliffs will find places difficult enough to test his head and the toughness of his fingers. One glen deserves a few words of special mention. It is the Strazyska dale, running parallel to the dale of Zakopane, and only some three miles west from the Ironwork village. You follow a path along the northern foot of the hills, and turn south up this narrow glen, where a rough track winds along the bank of the stream, crossing and recrossing it by stepping-stones. Soon the dell grows narrower, till there is only room for stream and path. A long row of towers of white rock, 40 to 60 feet high, rise on the right out of the dense wood, while opposite, the hill-side rises so steeply that the pines can but just hold on to it. Still farther up the vale widens, and a soft slope of rich green pasture appears, with three or

four chalets standing upon it, where cheese is made during the summer, and the cowherds live. Through the forest which encircles this glade one sees waterfalls flashing out; and behind, closing in the glen, is a mighty wall of rock, its smooth grey front coloured by streaks of blue and black, where some tiny rill trickles out from a crevice, or drips along the face. You halt and may then climb to the top of the precipice by a circuitous path and enjoy a noble prospect over the plains of Poland and Hungary. Or you turn eastward over an easy col which divides this glen from the next, and return down it through scenery scarcely less lovely, where are mossy woods and miniature cliffs draped with tufts of edelweiss, to your humble quarters at Zakopane. It is not exciting like a great snow expedition in the Alps or Pyrenees; but it is perfect in its beauty; and the quiet sylvan solitude of these mountains gives them a charm of their own, a distinctive sentiment which is wanting where one is oppressed by the proximity of tremendous peaks.

This is the character of the country immediately round Zakopane, which I have described first because it is the best centre—indeed, almost the only spot from which the Polish side of the Tátra can be comfortably explored. But a little farther to the east—in fact, as soon as one crosses a low pass into the next valley—it changes completely. For here one leaves the limestone hills,

and comes upon the far more stern and thrilling scenery of the central mass of granite. The simplest way in which I can give some idea of this region is by describing an expedition which we made from Zakopane to the summit of the principal, indeed almost the only pass over the main chain from Poland into Hungary, and which goes by the name of the Polnischer Kamm. It is a two days' walk; one day over the Zavrat Pass to the Fish Lake (Halas tó); and another from the Fish Lake to Schmeks, the great watering-place of Northern Hungary. We set out from Zakopane at eight o'clock on a threatening morning in August. It was no easy matter to get off; for at the last moment one of the guides, or rather porters, who had been engaged for us, demanded exactly twice the regulation pay; and we were obliged to replace him, since it would never have done to break through the tariff which the local authorities have established. That tariff is certainly low enough according to Swiss notions, being 1½ gulden (less than three shillings) per diem. When this difficulty had been settled, another arose. The landlady presented a bill three folio pages long, written in very cramped and, to us, undecipherable German handwriting—a bill which by dint of enumerating everything supplied during two days, down to sheets for the beds (charged separately from the rooms and the beds) and mustard at dinner, brought out so absurdly

large a total that we could not, in common fairness to the Berliners who might come after us, pay it as it stood. It was provoking to find that even primitive Zakopane is not wholly unspoiled, and that the rule, the less you get the more you pay, holds true here as elsewhere. A party of Polish gentlemen, including the Rector of the University of Krakow, had started an hour before us, but our quicker English pace brought us abreast of them by the time that we got into the next valley, where a general halt was called to drink milk at a cluster of huts. One usually finds a chalet or two in every glen; but far fewer than in the Alps, and never at such great elevations. While the lowlands of Galicia are fully as populous as France or South Germany, the mountain districts are much less so. One may travel for miles up the bottom of a glen without meeting a soul; indeed, there are no villages at all fairly within the mountain region; they all lie just outside, where the valleys open into the plain. Perhaps the reason is that there is so much less pasture land, the ground that is not covered with forest being mostly steep and rocky. From the chalets we turned off the track up the glen to visit a little lake which is notable as being the only one in the district whose waters have a light green tint. All the rest are either dark green or dark blue. It lay about two miles off at the foot of the magnificent granite peak of Swinniça, one of the

highest and boldest of the whole group (7574 feet above the sea). Unfortunately, the clouds were so thick that no colour was discernible: the lake was simply murky, like all its brethren. Regaining the main path and mounting another glen through a wilderness of loose rocks, we came to the Czarny Staw, or Black Lake, a large sheet of water which lies in a deep hollow surrounded by magnificent black precipices, their tops riven into fantastic teeth of rock, miniature aiguilles, most of which looked hopelessly inaccessible. Indeed, it was hard to say how any exit could be found from the amphitheatre of crags, so steep were the acclivities towards the south, where our route lay. Clambering up a gully, and passing several little fields of snow, we emerged on a second and higher hollow, in whose centre lay another but much smaller lake, half of which was covered with a sheet of ice, and on whose margin we discovered quite a garden of scarce Alpine plants studding the patches of herbage where a tiny rill descended from the melting snows. From this it was a stiff pull of an hour, first upon solid rock and then over loose stones lying at a high angle, up to the crest of the Zavrat Pass, which we reached soon after noon. Here we were greeted by a blast of wind so violent that we could not sit on the top, but had to crouch down behind and peer over. The crest is a positive knife edge—you may almost anywhere sit astride of it—and

this is the rule all through the granite mountains. It is one of their most notable features.

We were now immediately below the noble crags of Swinniça, from which, owing to its central position, there may be had one of the finest views in the whole Tátra. But after mounting some 300 feet, the wind, coming with thick showers, blew with such force that it was impossible to keep one's feet, and even to return to the rest of the party at the col was not easy. There would indeed have been little use in going on, for the mist allowed nothing to be seen. Below us lay a profound valley, full of cloud, through which a bare dreary lake surrounded by loose masses of rock could just be discerned, and beyond the lake another lofty ridge, the frontier of Hungary. A more lamentable landscape could not be imagined; and at this moment the showers settled into a fierce pelting rain, which drove us down into the valley in the hope of shelter behind some of the vast blocks which strew its floor. It was desirable not to get drenched; for we had no change of clothes, and one of the party was far from well. Huddling behind the blocks while the rain was heaviest, and running on ahead when it abated, we gradually made our way down this valley, which bears the name (I forbear to give the Polish) of the Valley of Five Lakes, and reached the biggest of the five, which in any other weather would have been beautiful, and

even now had a certain dismal majesty about it. At its lower end the stream which issues from it thunders down a precipice in two magnificent leaps, making a fall that would be fine anywhere, but which was specially beautiful from the dazzling purity of the water. Even finer than the cascade was the view. Beyond the deep glen into which the river plunged rose a savage ridge—the Zavrat, from which the pass we had crossed takes its name—its top showing a long sky-line of serrated crags and spires, its face seamed with gullies, and clothed, where not too steep for vegetation, with dense masses of dwarf pine, whose dark green gave an indescribably sombre hue to the scene. One even grander view, however, still awaited us. Leaving the main valley, and keeping along the mountain-side till the path began to turn again southwards towards Hungary (for all this time we had been still in Poland, on the north side of the main ridge), we came, about six in the evening, to a point from which a new landscape opened before us. Standing at a height of about 5000 feet, we saw immediately beneath us, towards the south-east, a valley full of deep black pine forest. Its upper end is filled by a large and nearly circular lake, and above the lake towers a range of granite cliffs, worthy of the Alps or the Caucasus. At every point but one they rise with terrible steepness from its still waters; and at that one point a sort of recess has been carved

out of the mountain, in which there lies upon a sort of shelf a second and smaller lake, girt in by precipices even more terrible. It is a perfect cirque, rivalling the Cirque at Gavarnie, in the Pyrenees, or that other corrie in the bosom of the Sorapis, behind Cortina d' Ampezzo, which lovers of the Dolomite mountains know so well. Indeed, it is in one respect grander than either of these more famous spots. For in both of them the rocks are limestone, while here the solid strength of the granite gives a wilder and grimmer character to the scene. The weather, from which we had suffered so much during the day, was now all that could have been desired. A huge blue-black cloud stood up into heaven behind the great peaks, and threw over them, and the abyss in which the lakes lay, a more than common gloom. One wandering mass of mist had got caught between the main precipice and a noble aiguille that projects from it; and made this bastion of rock stand out much as the Aiguille de Dru hangs over the Mer de Glace. Here was no ice, only patches of snow in the hollows of the crags. But the contrast of woods below and savage rock above was sufficient, and the glassy surface of the lake was beautiful as any ice-field.

In admiring the blue-black cloud we had forgotten what it was laden with. Suddenly the rain came down heavier than ever, and we were wet through before, descending swiftly through

the woods, we could reach our night's quarters on the banks of the larger lake. The Galician Tátra-Union, one of the numerous Alpine clubs which have sprung up on the Continent of late years, has erected a wooden hut to afford shelter to travellers in this the central and most striking point of the Polish mountain land. The society's funds being limited, the hut is small and rude, and the man who takes charge of it has seldom anything but eggs, bread, and rum to place before his visitors. We found that the best room, itself a poor one, had been bespoken for the Krakow party, which we had thrice passed on the way; they, like most Continental walkers, moving scarcely half as fast as English climbers are wont to do. But any shelter was welcome on such a night, and in such a lonely hungry spot; and as one of our guides, who could speak a little German, told us that he had brought a young English lady and her father here two years before, when the hut-keeper was away, and no food to be had, and that she had enjoyed it, we could in no case have dared to murmur. Fortunately, our knapsacks contained some excellent tea, and we were able to return the kindness of two Polish tourists, whom we found already installed, by exchanging a share of our strong brew for their sugar and cold mutton. Soon the Rectorial party arrived, and occupied, to the number of eight, the inner room, while we and the two Poles stretched

ourselves on the floor of the outer one, wrapped in plaids which had been kept passably dry, and sought to make the room and ourselves cheerful with rum toddy and fragrant smoke. There were some guides, porters, and miscellaneous people about, so the tiny hut must have covered more than twenty people that night. The Poles, who had been astonished to hear that we were English —what should bring Englishmen here? — plied us with questions about politics. England had again become an object of interest to the quidnuncs, and, of course, all Polish ideas and feelings begin and end with hatred of Russia. They were specially curious about the British Prime Minister (Lord Beaconsfield), whose nationality and literary antecedents distinguish him in their eyes from all other European statesmen. We indicated our opinion. "But is he not, then, a great man?" they asked. One of the party gave a somewhat decided expression to his view of the Premier's policy. "Ach! you are Gladstonists," they replied; "that is why you don't like him." Then we told them that, of course, all Englishmen loved Poland, even those belonging to the party which had failed to give her a helping hand in past days, and presently we went to sleep in amity.

The lake, which the Poles call Rybie Staw and the Hungarians Halas tó (both names mean Fish Lake), is one of the largest in the Tátra, though it is really rather what we should call a tarn,

being no bigger than Grasmere. The smaller one, lying on the shelf above, is in the Hungarian tongue Tengerszen (Polish, Morskiôko; German, Meeresauge), all three names meaning the Eye of the Sea, from an odd fancy which the people have that it communicates with the ocean. You are gravely told by the peasants that, when the air is calm, waves rise on its surface, a phenomenon which must be caused by there being at that moment a storm raging in the Atlantic or the Baltic. I can only account for such a whimsical notion (which is also entertained as regards some of the other Tátra lakes) by supposing that it is due to the depth of the lake, for the country folk say it is bottomless, and that the belief comes down from a time when the world was supposed to float on as well as in the circumambient ocean. Homer says somewhere that all rivers and springs and long watercourses issue from deep-flowing ocean; and this local belief may be a last trace of the oldest cosmogonies.

Next morning, a bright but nipping morning, after a plunge into the clear keen waters of Halas tó—to the amazement of the other travellers, who could not imagine why, when the air was so cold already, we should seek an even colder element —we set off to cross the main chain into Hungary. The first part of the way is through a valley of wild and wonderful loveliness. It is richly wooded, with sunny glades of pasture scattered

here and there among the pines and birches, and the bright river flashing out from between the trees in long runs of foam and pools of shimmering green. On each side inaccessible rock-walls soar into the sky; and now and then up some deep gully, one catches sight of a snow-field hidden far up under the highest tops. The outskirts of the Alps have nothing more beautiful. And indeed there is nothing in the Alps quite like this. For there the granite mountains lie in the middle of the chain, starting up from among glaciers and snow-fields. Here the aiguilles rise immediately out of pasture and forest. It is rather as if one should combine a foreground from the Bavarian Alps, with their exquisite woods and lawns, with a background of Norwegian rock. At one place we had to cross the river, and found the wooden bridge gone. The guides seized their axes—in this country every one carries an axe—and hewed down two trees long enough to span the stream, which they made firm by felling a third and laying it across the end, and so we safely crossed.

Out of these soft landscapes we mounted at length into the upper rock-land. Every valley in the Tátra has several successive floors or stages; each nearly level, and each separated from that above it by a steep ascent. In the highest floor of this glen lies a lakelet, the Frozen Lake, of singular beauty. All round are bare rocks,

bearing neither a shrub nor a blade of grass. It is a scene of utter desolation, with no colour save the grey or black of the mouldering granite. But the surface of the lake itself is covered by countless bergs and ice-floes, and among them the water sparkles with a blue brighter than that of the sky above. The sound of waterfalls comes faintly up out of the glen below; the scream of the eagle from the crags, and the shrill piping of the marmots close at hand, are heard in the stillness; white clouds sail through the air, and when a breeze stirs the lake, the tiny icebergs kiss one another and then float softly away. Just above this Frozen Lake the path climbs to the summit of the pass. It is a steep and rugged path, not dangerous, except from the risk of stones rolled down from above, but so difficult that we did not wonder at our guides' admiration for the spirit of the young English lady who had followed them across it "like a chamois." The top of the Polnischer Kamm ("comb" is a good name for these narrow crests), 7208 feet above the sea, is a mere edge; and from it, standing with one foot in Hungary and the other in Galicia, and close under the loftiest and most savage of all the Tátra summits, you look through noble portals of rock far away into the lowland of both countries. It is but four hours' descent to Schmecks, the capital of the Hungarian Switzerland. But Schmecks, that quaint little oasis in the forest,

with its own circle of lakes and valleys and excursions, its pleasant primitive ways, its baths, and balls, and politics—is a place of so much consequence in Hungarian eyes as to deserve to be separately dealt with.

THE TÁTRA

2. The Mountains of Hungary (1878)

The southern slopes of the Tátra lie in the county of Zips, or Szepes, in the north-west of Hungary, where it borders on Galicia, some hundred and fifty miles to the north of Pesth. This country is often spoken of as "the so-called (sogenannte) Zips"; perhaps because the name is a familiar abbreviation, for Szepes does not seem to have had, in its long vicissitudes of fortune, any other title. Any one with the requisite knowledge and industry might make out of those vicissitudes an interesting history. The district was settled in the twelfth century by Germans from Saxony, whom the reigning Hungarian King, Geisa the Second, brought in to reclaim the then wild regions and tame the wild Slavs who inhabited them, just as he persuaded a large colony to settle in Transylvania where they still remain, in their so-called Saxon land, a solid German isle in the midst of Wallachs and Magyars. Be that as it may, the Saxons built for themselves here in Zips, sixteen German towns—tiny little towns, of which the biggest has

never had more than 5000 inhabitants—formed a league under the title of *Fraternitas Plebaniorum Regalium*, maintained a stiff fight for municipal rights against the Hungarian nobles who overshadowed them, embraced Lutheranism in due course, were (thirteen of them) transferred by King Sigismund (afterwards Emperor) in 1412, by way of pledge, to the Polish King Vladislav, and only finally recovered by Hungary when the first partitionment of Poland took place in the days of Maria Theresa in 1772; and here, after having kept to their German ways for so many centuries, they at length began to be absorbed into, and learn the tongue of the Slavonic people that surrounded them. Now, however, that process has stopped, and those who have not yet been Slavonised may probably remain Germans for a long time to come.

However, I am not now concerned with the history of Zips, but with its mountains. It is the mountain land of Hungary, the region where the highest summits, and by far the most charming scenery within the wide compass of the Hungarian kingdom, are to be found; and on the southern slope of these mountains, embosomed in profound forests, lies Schmecks, the prettiest and most famous of all the watering-places of Hungary.

First of all, to complete the account given of them in the last preceding article, a few words

about these mountains. They go by the name of Tátra, and consist of a ridge of granite, very steep, very narrow, its central line and watershed nowhere less than 6000 feet in height, upon which, or on the short spurs that project from it, are set, like the turrets along a city wall, a row of sharp and savage peaks, the highest of which reaches 8700 feet. This granite axis is about twenty miles in length, with a general east and west direction. At its eastern extremity it is prolonged for a few miles in a line of bold limestone hills, and then sinks abruptly to the valley of the river Popper, flowing N.E. to join the Vistula. On the west it subsides more gradually into a confused mass of limestone ranges which run away out westward, sinking at last into more hills towards the great railway junction of Oderberg. The total length of the mountain mass may be put at about forty miles. Breadth it has hardly any—that is to say, the central ridge is a mere knife edge, and the spurs which run off from it at right angles are seldom more than three or four miles long. Then the valleys are short—indeed, on the south side they are little more than semi-circular hollows, or basins in the mountain, what in Scotland are called "corries"; and he who stands on the central ridge has the undulating country of Northern Hungary directly under his feet, while northwards he looks over forest-clad valleys to where the great plain of Galicia meets

the horizon. But perhaps the best way of giving an idea of the structure of the mass is to compare it with a spot which most tourists know—the Island of Arran in the Firth of Clyde. Any one who remembers the aspect of the northern half of that striking island as it rises, opposite the coast of Ayrshire, will have a good notion of the Tátra seen from the south, if he imagines its line of serrated pinnacles twice as long, twice as high, and even more wildly savage, and if he substitutes for the blue waters of the Firth a broad and nearly level valley, whose rich corn-fields contrast with the sombre forest that clothes the skirts of the hills. A grander or more peculiar mountain view it would be hard to find anywhere. Eleven lofty peaks, each flanked by minor crags and teeth of rock, rise up against the sky, their upper 3000 feet all of bare dark-grey granite, with here and there snow patches glistening under the sun. Deep black hollows lie between the peaks, but the lakes that fill most of them are too far sunk to be visible; all is grim and stern. Next below comes a zone of dwarf pine, which, from a distance, shows like herbage, only that its hue is of a darker green, and below this, again, the more gentle slopes are covered with dense fir woods, which descend to the cheerful fields and villages of the plain country. Nowhere, perhaps, in the middle of a continent does a mountain mass spring with such magnificent abruptness from a

level country. It reminded me, on a far vaster scale, of the noble line of the Lofoten Isles in Norway, seen from Bodo, which rise right out of the sea. In looking at the Tátra one felt as if its sudden rise would be more natural if it were an island, and in marking its boldness and its complete isolation, one finds it hard to believe that no sea wave breaks on a beach nearer than four hundred miles away.

Perhaps some one will say, "But in what sense is the Tátra isolated? How about the Carpathians? Were we not taught at school that the Carpathians are the mountains that separate Hungary from Galicia, and do not they form a long and continuous chain?"

This is a natural question; and it is, indeed, just the question which my friends and I asked ourselves when we got this panoramic view of the Tátra from the south. Where are the Carpathians? Where is that long black line of mountains which all the maps show engirdling Hungary on the north and north-east, and to which this Tátra ought to belong?

The answer is, that the Carpathians, like some other things that have figured on maps, like the "Grampian Chain," for instance, in Scotland, and the long range of "Mountains of the Moon" in Africa, are to some extent a fiction of the geographers. There is no such long mountain chain dividing Hungary from Galicia as is shown

on most maps. One can only suppose that some geographer, on the look-out for a "natural boundary," and knowing that the political frontier of the two kingdoms coincided generally with the watershed between the Danube basin and that of the Vistula; knowing also that there were high mountains in certain places along that frontier, fancied them continuous, and created out of the watershed this imposing range, the Carpathians, which we used to know well in school books and atlases. There is no continuous chain; and the traveller who expects one will be startled indeed (as we were) when, on reaching the summit of the Lomnitzer Spitze, the easternmost of the high Tátra peaks, he looks away out eighty or ninety miles to the eastward, along the watershed, and sees no Carpathians at all; only an undulating land of forest-covered hills.

To return, however, from these "Mountains of the Moon" to our real and solid Tátra. Before describing Schmecks and the excursions from it, let me give some sort of notion of what this little alpine land is like, and wherein it differs from better known rivals. Its most peculiar feature is the surprising abruptness with which it rises, especially on the Hungarian, that is, the southern and south-eastern sides. From the plain, or rather the broad, open, cultivated valley of the river Poprad, here about 2000 feet above sea-level, there are three slopes or zones to be crossed

before one reaches the highest tops, nearly 9000 feet high, which lie only seven or eight miles off, as the crow flies. The first slope is the longest, and comparatively gentle. It is four or five miles wide, pretty uniform in surface, with no deep valleys cutting into it, or ridges rising out of it, and covered with a thick forest of tall pines and firs, a sort of dark green mantle shaken out round the skirts of the mountain. The higher one gets, the steeper does the acclivity become, and the smaller the trees, till at last progress is checked by the dwarf pine (*Pinus Mughus*) which the Germans call *Krummholz*, a low creeping shrub whose numerous curved branches, rising only a few feet from the ground, are extremely strong and elastic. This hateful little tree, which one finds occasionally in the East Tyrolese and Italian Alps, is especially fond of growing on beds of loose stones, where nothing else will grow, its roots running deep down among them. Then the climber comes, if, indeed, he has succeeded in forcing his way through the dense mass of tangled stems and boughs, to the region of bare stones and rock. The ascent is now sharp enough to put him on his mettle; and in many places it is over immense beds of loose blocks, lying at a high angle, and often so unstable that they give way under a heavy tread, and expose the unwary tourist to serious danger of losing his footing, or of being hurt by them as they topple over.

There is little grass in this higher zone; only small patches of herbage among the rocks, but no stretches of flower-studded pasture like those which one finds not only in the Alps, but on the limestone mountains at either end of the central mass of the Tátra. It is all bare, harsh granite, dark grey or black, where a streamlet trickles over it. As one nears the crest of the ridge, even the flowerets that nestled among the blocks disappear; beds of never-melting snow fill the deeper hollows, and all around wildly rifted crags tower up into the sky. The boldness of the pinnacles, the bareness of the precipices, the intense sternness of the whole aspect of this highest region of the Tátra, equal anything in the Alps or Pyrenees, and only yield to the black horror of the volcanic mountains of Iceland. Yet all the while one is close to the plains, with no minor ridges intervening. From the midst of this rock scenery, as noble in form (though less huge in bulk) as that of the Aiguilles of Mont Blanc, you look down on cultivated fields and trim German villages; you hear the church bells' note wafted up into these savage solitudes, and can almost make out the reapers as they bind the sheaves, and groups of children playing in the streets, as from the top of Table Mountain one sees the vehicles in the streets of Cape Town.

But the Tátra has nooks of beauty, rich and

romantic beauty, to relieve the solemn grandeur of its wind-swept crest. Several valleys run into the mass, wide and shallow towards the plain, but folded deep between lofty ridges as they approach their heads. Nearly every valley consists of several successive floors or stages, level terraces separated from one another by steep slopes or walls of rock four or five hundred feet high; and on each of such floors there often lies a tiny lake. The water of these lakes is dark blue and exquisitely clear; and the wind that plays round the tops seldom troubles their glassy surface, in which the crags that surround them are mirrored. The higher tarns—there are over thirty in all—are sometimes studded with icebergs, while the lower are fringed by pines and junipers and all the luxuriant undergrowth of a moist wood. Miniature cliffs rise from them, while here and there a great mass that has tumbled from the overhanging precipice forms an islet, and in course of time gets covered with heather and the tufts of the graceful wood-rush. Then the streams that gush out from these lakes are of wonderful beauty. All are crystal clear, for there are no glaciers, as in Switzerland, to pollute them with mud; and they flash down the valleys in a line of foaming runs and leaps, with here and there a deep still pool, through whose sun-filled water one can count every granite pebble that lies at the bottom. Where the glen suddenly

breaks down from one of its floors to another lower down, there comes a succession of waterfalls, with the stream now raging through a narrow cleft, now flinging itself out in bursts of foam over huge sheets of granite. To be sure, these streams are not large, and the waterfalls are trifling in volume compared to the great cataracts of Switzerland and Norway. But in a waterfall, more distinctly, perhaps, than in any other beautiful object, it is not size that charms us nearly so much as brilliance of colour, grace of form, and the happy disposition of surrounding rocks and trees: an ancient larch drooping its boughs across the chasm, a tall tower of rock standing up against the sunset behind the pool from whence the torrent takes its leap. Thus the waters of the Tátra, whether sleeping under the shadow of the inmost precipices, or joyously glancing through the forest glens, have a fascination which the grander but less pure and less approachable lakes and rivers of the Alps seldom possess. Only in the limestone region of Salzkammer Gut round Ischl does one find water of equal beauty, vividly blue as these are vividly green. With this, too, there is the charm of solitude. On the northern Polish side of the mountains, where the slopes are gentler and the valleys longer, one sometimes finds a group of chalets with herds scattered over the hills. Here even a single hut is rare and there is little or no

pasture on the heights, for the trees cover all that is not bare, hard, herbless rock: the woodcutter who plies his work in winter comes up from some village far below among the corn-fields; the mountains are left to nature and the creatures who burrow among the stones.

Why, it may be asked, are there no glaciers or perpetual snow-fields upon the Tátra, seeing that its peaks reach nearly to 9000 feet, and lie farther to the north than the Alps, where the line of perpetual snow (which one may roughly define as the line above which most of the ground, not being too steep to bear snow, is covered with snow even in August) is generally under 9000 feet? If the snow-line were merely a question of latitude and elevation we ought to find it in these mountains at from 7000 to 7500 feet. The explanation is no doubt to be found partly in the isolation of the Tátra, which rises out of a wide tract of comparatively level country, with warm winds from the Hungarian plains playing on its southern face, and partly in the very small superficial area of its highest region. There is above 7000 feet little ground level enough for snow to remain on it through the summer, and therefore no mass of snow can gather sufficient to keep down the atmospheric temperature and enable each fresh fall to resist the dissolving power of the sun and the south-western winds. Hence, although heavy snow showers descend on the

higher peaks even in August, they disappear in a day or two, and we seldom find, even on the northern side, permanent beds of névé, except in deep and well-shadowed hollows. Such beds, however, sometimes descend to a height of not more than 6000 feet above the sea; and they give a singularly grim and dismal character to the valleys in which they occur.

On the southern slope of the mountains, some 3000 feet above the level of the sea, stands Schmecks (called in the Magyar tongue Tátra Fured, Tátra baths), the tourist's centre for this land of beauty, and indeed almost the only spot within its bounds where he can find even the simplest accommodation. It occupies a little clearing, four or five acres in size, in the dense forest, and consists of about twelve or fourteen houses, most of them of wood and three stories high, built irregularly round an open space of grass, in the midst of which is placed a tiny church.[1] There is a restaurant, where breakfast and dinner are provided within certain hours, a coffee-house, with a large ball-room, a bureau, and a bathing establishment, where you have plunges and douches of all kinds in intensely cold clear water. The other houses — which bear fancy names, such as Vádaskürt (hunting horn), Tengerszem (eye of the sea), Tünderlak (Alpine

[1] This page describes Schmecks as it was in 1878. It was doubtless much larger and more frequented in 1914; and since 1920 it has ceased to belong to Hungary.

fairy), Rigi, and so forth — contain bedrooms, very simple, and, indeed, primitive in their furniture and general style, but quite clean, and good enough for anybody who has not been spoiled by the luxurious habits of western Europe. All meals are taken in the restaurant, and in 1878 such things as private sitting-rooms were unknown. If the weather is too wet to sit out of doors on the benches or verandahs, one goes to the coffee-house and reads the newspapers, or plays billiards or cards in the public rooms. The whole place belongs to one company, which pays a rent for it to the commune, and does all that is required for the visitors. Persons in delicate health might find it inconvenient to have to go frequently to and fro from their rooms to the restaurant and coffee-house across the central green, whose walks are moist in bad weather; but the visitor soon accepts this cheerfully as part of the agreeable simplicity, and a foreigner enjoys the opportunities which the open-air free and easy life gives him of becoming acquainted with the parti-coloured society of the place. In this spot, and a little way off to the west, in a still more recent forest clearing, there was at the time of our visit another establishment. It in like manner consists of a restaurant, a bureau, and two or three lodging-houses, and is managed on hydropathic principles; and between them they can accommodate four or five hundred

guests, probably more at a pinch. Hungarian magnates, among whom was Count Andrassy, then foreign minister of Austro-Hungary, had private villas.

The guests are mostly Hungarians, with a sprinkling of Germans from Vienna and the Teutonic parts of the monarchy, and a few Prussians, mostly from Silesia. The Poles content themselves with their own side of the mountains; and Russians do not seem to come at all. Perhaps they feel that they would not be welcome. Now and then a wandering Englishman appears, but the amount of interest which our little party excited seemed to show that this can be but rarely. The official tongue is Magyar, but German is equally common, and foreigners who can speak it find no difficulty in getting along. Whatever is written up is written in both languages: the names painted on the houses, the lists of viands and wines on the restaurant cartes, the directions on the finger-posts which indicate the forest-paths. Even among themselves Magyars talk a good deal of German, whereas thirteen years ago, before the Austrian Court had been driven by the misfortunes of 1866 to submit to the demands of Hungary and re-establish constitutional government, it was a point of honour to talk no German at all, and to be proudly national even in the details of dress. An English friend who travelled down the Danube in 1862

told me that when Hungarians talked to him they were apt to begin by saying, "Don't speak German," but having thus relieved their minds the conversation went on merrily in the forbidden tongue.

Oddly enough, here in the Tátra neither Magyars nor Germans can deem themselves at home. The country population of Zips is not Magyar but Slovak, the Germans being nearly all in the lowland towns; and even in Gomor, the next county to the south, Slavs greatly outnumber Magyars. Up in these woods one can hardly talk of population at all: there are only bears, wolves, and squirrels. But in the valley below, the inhabitants are Slovaks, speaking a tongue near akin to that of Bohemia and Moravia, much more distantly related to Polish, and still more distantly to Russian and Serbian. The German colonists settled down in the middle of these aboriginal Slovaks, and doubtless Germanised a good many of them, so that one finds German and Slovak villages mixed, and a certain number of Slovaks who have become Lutherans, though the majority are either Roman Catholics or Uniates (*i.e.* orthodox Easterns who have acknowledged Rome). About sixty years ago the Slav tongue was gaining ground on the German, and villages which spoke German two hundred years ago had come to speak Slovak. The Magyars do not make much way in absorbing the Slovaks, even

where they dwell intermingled with them; not that they live on ill terms, for they and the Slovaks are pretty good friends, but simply that the less advanced and less politically active race seems somehow to be rather more prolific and more tenacious of its own ways. In these northern counties, however, there is no Magyar peasantry, though great part of the land belongs to Magyar nobles. The Magyars are a people of the plains, occupying the forests on the borders of Moldavia, having their old national home in the vast level which they call the Alfold on both sides of the Theiss. It is only the Szeklers of Transylvania who are a real mountain race. However, there are so many Magyar visitors here at Schmecks that one may properly say Zips contains three nations, just as Transylvania contains three —Magyars, Germans, and Wallachs. But the casual visitor might never realise he is in a Slav land, for he would hear nothing but German or Hungarian spoken by the people he meets, even the servants (except those who do the rough out-door work) talking the tongues of civilisation.

Society is friendly and cheery at Schmecks, with a simplicity which suits the surroundings. Although it ranks as a Kurort (health-resort) no melancholy figures of invalids are seen. Those who come for the sake of health, come to find it in the fresh mountain air and the perfume of the pine woods rather than in the mineral waters,

which are not strong, and are drunk more for pleasure than as medicines. For flavour they do not compare with some of the other effervescing waters of Hungary, the most agreeable of which is that of Borszek on the frontiers of Transylvania and Moldavia. There are several springs in and near the hamlet. The most copious of them, which gushes out under the verandah of the restaurant, is impregnated with carbonic acid, and mixes agreeably with the slightly acid wines of the country. All over Hungary table wine is commonly drunk with an equal portion of mineral water; the ordinary drinking water is unusually cold and pure. Of the various baths, the oddest is that made by steeping the young shoots of *Krummholz* (dwarf pine) in hot water. Its strong aromatic smell makes it pleasant as well as invigorating; but the bather will do well to keep his face out of it, for when the solution is strong, he emerges from it with his skin of a fine mahogany tint.

The occupations of the day are soon described. Early in the morning you are awakened by the gipsy band, never wanting in Hungary, which plays on a terrace in front of the bath-house at frequent intervals all day long. People begin to gather in groups towards ten o'clock; breakfast follows; then they loiter about the green, or listen to the band on the terrace, or smoke in the coffee-house. Later on, parties are made up on foot or

horseback through the woods, or to the Kohlbach waterfalls, half-way to which there is a charming point of view, of course with a restaurant, where beer and wild strawberries are consumed to an amazing extent. By sunset every one is back; dinner begins about seven, and goes on, one group dropping in after another, till past nine, when the coffee-house fills again, and the world is not asleep till past eleven. It is an uneventful way of killing time, in which days slip away before one thinks of counting them, pleasantly enough, but leaving little to remember. The only excitements are the tombola, a sort of lottery which comes off every Sunday evening during dinner, enriching the winners with all sorts of articles, from garden-seats down to pen-wipers, and a dance every Saturday night, and as much oftener as the director chooses or the company demands. Then the gipsy band is in its glory. One never seems to have heard dance music before. All the music in Hungary comes from the gipsies. They go about the country together in bands of from ten to twenty persons, with a chief who leads and gives the time, and they play entirely from ear with never a printed note before them, and they play airs always of the same style, peculiar airs little known in other countries. The "Rákóczy March," which is now becoming familiar in England, is a type of these tunes, and one of the most popular among them. Called from

Francis Rákóczy, the famous national leader in the struggle of the patriotic Hungarian party against the Hapsburgs from 1704 to 1708, it is the most inspiriting, for fighting purposes, of all national airs, not even excepting the "Marseillaise." When all the gipsy fiddles are going, with the cymbals striking in, there is, as Browning says, "no keeping one's haunches still." It is the tarantula's bite: you must dance, whether you like it or no; and you can dance on long after the natural and usual vigour of your legs has been exhausted. Needless to say that the Hungarians dance well, and dance best of all their national "csárdás," over which the gipsy playing becomes absolutely frantic. It is an odd and indescribable kind of dance, in which a great number of couples engage, each taking no heed of the others, and in whose figure, if one can speak of a figure, there is unbounded variety, though the step is always the same. Sometimes you seize your partner, sometimes you let her go; sometimes you pursue her, sometimes she pursues you; sometimes you appear to be indifferent to one another, anon you are more closely linked and more violently warm than ever. There is no limit to the individual character you may throw into your movements, each partner stimulating the other to something fresh and bright. The Hungarians, who are proud of their national amusement, in which they think that the ardour of what they call their Asiatic nature finds

fit expression, admit that it is a dance full of "coquetterie," which is perhaps the reason why it is, as they tell you, "danced best of all by the ingenuous peasants."

These simple gaieties are of course diversified by a great deal of talk, which—for are we not in Hungary, the most political country in the world?—is of course chiefly political talk. Whatever the stranger's own views may be, he will find it hard not to sympathise with the Hungarians when they state their grievances against the Hapsburgs and their apprehensions of Russia. Englishmen are not usually welcome among Continental politicians, who see in us a selfish, trade-loving people, complacent in their prosperous isolation, willing enough to subscribe for the relief of physical suffering, but insensible to the larger and nobler emotions, disposed to try every question by its bearing on their own immediate interests, and pharisaically proud of the success with which they have kept out of the wars and embarrassments of less fortunate neighbours. This legendary conception, which seems to date from the years after Waterloo, still holds its ground in Germany, France, and Austria. However, there is one country where Englishmen are and always have been welcome. And if ever welcome, then most welcome at a moment when England was believed to be the great antagonist of Russia, eager for a fray with the old enemy of Hungary.

My friends and I, as it so happened, though not keen party men, were agreed in thinking that Lord Beaconsfield's Government had been hopelessly wrong from first to last in their conduct of the Eastern question. It was therefore a little embarrassing to receive endless compliments on the noble way in which England had behaved at the Congress of Berlin in resisting Russia and befriending the gallant Turks. And our embarrassment reached its climax one evening at dinner at the house of a fine old Hungarian magnate who owned an estate in the neighbourhood. When the generous vintage of Tokay had been flowing for some hours, and many patriotic sentiments had been expressed, our jovial host rose, amid tremendous clinking of glasses and shouts of "Eljen! Eljen!"[1] and proposed in eloquent terms the toast of "England and her Prime Minister, who have stood so well by the Turks," and called on me to respond.

What gives Schmecks perhaps its greatest charm is the contrast between the gay little life that ebbs and flows round its green and terrace and coffee-house, its gossips and dances enlivened by the stirring strains of the gipsy fiddles, its political declamations, and the great silent gloom of the environing forest. It is a sunny islet lapped by soft waves in a wide and melancholy

[1] The national cry of applause, like "Bravo!" or "Hoch!" or "Banzai Nippon!"

sea. You pass behind the houses, and in five minutes find yourself far from all human sights or sounds, and may wander about for hours in the deep shade without meeting anything but birds and squirrels. Even the ocean and the desert are less lonely, for there one has sunlight and clouds to bear one company, and at night the stars to steer one's way by. Here one is utterly cut off from the world, perhaps without even the means of returning to it; in these woods one can easily lose oneself; and if the visitors seldom get lost, that is because they do not quit the one or two beaten tracks which lead to the spots consecrated to excursions and restaurants. We, who explored for the sake of exploring, always forgetting to carry a compass, did lose ourselves repeatedly. Once, as we were returning from a walk late in the afternoon, an apparent short cut tempted us to strike off the path, which we meant to regain in a few yards. However, we could not and did not find it again. It had somehow turned off to the right or the left of us. Efforts to discover it only carried us farther away into a new part of the wood, where the character of the trees changed, and ultimately landed us in a swamp. When an hour had been spent in trying back in several directions, we discovered a hill from whose top—the trees being there comparatively thin—a distant mountain could be made out, and the direction in which Schmecks lay

conjectured. That was of course the opposite direction to the one on which we had been travelling. Then we struck off again on this new line. But nothing is so difficult as to keep to a straight line in walking among trees and over broken ground, where you have no sort of landmark to steer by. And the difficulty is rather increased by the profusion of tracks in these woods. You follow a good broad path for some way, and congratulate yourself on speedy deliverance. Then it forks. You choose the more beaten of the two paths. A little farther grass begins to fall over it from the sides; it is here and there blocked by a dead bush; it turns off in a direction you did not expect. You stop to deliberate. "Shall we pursue this treacherous path, or shall we retrace our steps to the fork and try the other branch, or shall we plunge once more into the forest in the direction where home would seem to be?" It is one of those problems where two heads are not much better than one, and may well be worse, since instead of following a consistent line of policy you are apt, like a Coalition Government, to adopt first one course and then another, or (most dangerous of all) to split the difference by splitting the angle between the two lines. Probably you decide to stick to the path you are on. It goes forward for a couple of hundred yards farther, and then ends abruptly in a thicket of briars, or narrows to a squirrel

track and ultimately runs up a tree. This was what befell us. One path after another betrayed ; darkness closed in, and we had begun to face the probability of spending the night upon a heap of damp boughs, with neither food nor fuel, and perhaps a bear for a bedfellow, when by the merest piece of luck we stumbled into the one high road that cuts the forest, leading from Schmecks to the plain, and in fifteen minutes found our way back to the welcome lights of the coffee-house. Bears are by no means scarce in these woods, though not so common as in the vaster forests of Eastern Transylvania. Once we saw in an outfield, where somebody had done a bit of clearing, the tracks of a beast who had been making a meal the night before, and the woodcutters have many a tale to tell both of them and of the wolves. Lynxes exist, but are rarely seen ; roe deer are pretty plentiful, and on the rugged mountain tops there are more chamois than are now left in the Swiss Alps. Of course all game is strictly preserved ; the peasants complain that they are not allowed to have guns wherewith they might shoot the marauding bears and hawks. However, the solitary pedestrian runs no risk from these wild creatures, who are all much more afraid of him than he can possibly be of them. Nobody gets hurt by a bear unless he has first attacked it. Neither does one hear such stories as are current in Russia of the bold-

ness of wolves in winter. Perhaps there are not enough of them to give one another the courage of combined operations in big packs.

More interesting than the rarely seen quadrupeds of this forest, more interesting even than its birds, of whom we noticed few except a large, loud, handsome woodpecker, is its vegetation. The climate of the Tátra is so moist, for the lofty peaks attract the clouds and give a heavy rainfall, that, instead of the bare soil common in the denser forests of Central Germany and of Russia, where neither grass nor shrubs flourish under the trees, one finds here a singular variety and profusion of plants and shrubs, a luxuriant undergrowth which gives an always changing charm of form and colour to the sylvan landscapes. The trees are mostly conifers, firs, pines, and larches, with a good deal of birch and sometimes alder ; beech and maple and hornbeam occur more rarely, and, I think, only in the limestone valleys or on the lowest slopes of the hills. Seen from a distance, a forest of conifers is no doubt less beautiful, though perhaps more austere in its dark monotony, than one where the more varied tints of deciduous trees predominate. But when one saunters hither and thither through these pine and fir woods, nothing lovelier can be imagined. The stones and the trunks of fallen trees are furred with brilliant mosses and lichens. Tall grasses with drooping, feathery panicles spring

up round the path, mixed with wood gentians, twayblades, anemones, and the stately light blue campanula; junipers and hollies rise out of thickets of whortleberry, glowing in their autumnal scarlet, while the ground is carpeted with wild strawberries and the mountain bilberry,[1] whose glossy dark leaves make a pretty setting to its crimson fruit. There is no sound through the cool, green twilight, except the faint rustling of the tree-tops in the breeze, or here and there the voice of a mountain brook among the mossy blocks. When the foam of such a brook is seen flashing out among the undergrowth, or when a shaft of sunlight strikes down upon this mass of tangled greenery, when through the waving boughs one catches a glimpse of the blue sky above, or at the end of a long vista, streaked with alternate lights and shadows, discovers a lordly tower of rock shaking from its sides the fleecy clouds of evening, one begins to understand the passion of the ancient poets for sylvan solitude, and why it was that while they seldom dwelt on the beauty of mountain forms their most vivid imaginings of a life penetrated by the love of Nature, and the sense of her mysterious communion with man, associated themselves with the rushing of the mountain stream and the solemn

[1] *Vaccinium Vitis Idaea*, which is extremely common all over the Tátra, and is a great ornament to the mountains of Scotland, as well as to the woods of Switzerland and Norway, and New England. Here it is largely used for the purpose of making jam, and moreover an excellent jam, eaten with meat.

calm of the mountain forest. Those who love Virgil will remember the lines in which the poet, fearing himself unfitted to penetrate the secrets of the starry heavens, and to discover the causes of earthquakes and tides, turns to the enjoyment of Nature's quiet beauties.

> Rura mihi et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes;
> Flumina amem silvasque inglorius . . .
> O qui me gelidis in vallibus Haemi
> Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!

We never tired of these woodland landscapes, for every step disclosed a new picture. The elements of beauty were always the same; but they were so numerous that the combinations were endless.

Such, nevertheless, is the power which the habit of seeking for some fresh excitement, and reckoning days lost wherein some effort has not been made and some result achieved, acquires over Englishmen, that we were not content to spend our fortnight in purposeless ramblings and musings among these verdurous shades. Probably we should have done better to rest and be content where beauty was all around, but the sharp peaks that towered above seemed to reproach our indolence. Plans were soon sketched out for attacking them, and the Major was asked to tell us where we might best expend our energies. The Major is so conspicuous a feature in the society of Schmecks that I hope I may be pardoned for dragging him into print as a public

character. There exists in Zips an Alpine Club called the Hungarian Carpathian Union (Magyarorszagi Karpategylet), which numbers several hundred members, nearly all Hungarians and Germanic Austrians, who interest themselves in the mountains, and seek to have them more thoroughly explored, and made more accessible to tourists. This club has its chief bureau at Kesmark, the oldest of the Zips towns, lying in the valley some eight miles from Schmecks. But during the summer Schmecks is practically its headquarters, and the residence of the invaluable Vice-President, who represents its multiform activity in the most lively and beneficent way. Poles and Hungarians always get on with one another: have they not a common enemy in Russia? The Herr Major was a Galician Pole by birth. After serving for more than twenty years in the Austro-Hungarian cavalry, he retired from his regiment, and being still in the vigour of life, devoted himself to the mountains, in the capacity of Vice-President of the Karpathen Verein. He keeps the accounts, he summons the meetings, he admits the members without ballot—at least he admitted us without having required from us any further or other evidence of mountaineering capacity than the possession of ice-axes (which, by the way, are quite useless in the Tátra)—he keeps the guides in order, he directs the construction here and there in the woods of the

shelter-huts, two or three of which have been erected at convenient spots to provide food and night harbour for the tourist in these solitudes, he lays out the line of tracks to be opened through the forest, and superintends the marking of the trees along them with a streak of white paint, so as to indicate the right path; fortunately the red, yellow and blue paint daubings which, no doubt, conveniently indicate but also deface the paths in parts of Tyrol have not been adopted in Zips. In fine, he pervaded the whole place with his genial and vigorous presence, and had even caused to be engraved on the back of his visiting-cards a list of the principal excursions to be made from Schmecks, with their respective distances calculated in hours. The Union, be it understood, is not precisely an Alpine Club, in the British sense of the word. As in the similar cases of the French and Italian Alpine Clubs, many of its members have never scaled a peak in their lives, and have no intention of putting their legs, never to speak of their necks, in any peril or discomfort whatsoever. A very few are climbers; some are naturalists; some are landowners of the neighbourhood; some are steady-going tourists, who resort here for a change of air and like a moderate walk; the rest are patriotic sympathisers. Nevertheless, the Club does a great deal of good in an unpretentious way. Besides, it possesses the prettiest little badge, a piece of *Edelweiss* (*Gna-*

phalium Leontopodium, which grows profusely on the limestone mountains, but never, I think, on the central mass of granite) set in blue and silver, in a circlet bearing the name of the Verein.

To come now to the mountain excursions, let me begin by explaining that three great peaks dominate Schmecks. Right above it, to the north, is the Schlagendorfer Spitze. I use the German names as, on the whole, more pronounceable, but every peak has also a Slovak and a Magyar name. This is the only one of the greater Tátra summits which is not so much a pinnacle as a long, high, narrow ridge, one huge mass of loose stones and (at the top) bare crags. Its summit is pretty easily accessible from Schmecks in about four hours' climbing (which a nimble walker may reduce to two and a half), at first through the woods, then over wearisome masses of loose blocks. To its east lies a deep valley, perhaps the prettiest and most varied valley in all the Southern Tátra, called the Kohlbach Dale; and beyond the valley the grand peak of the Lomnitzer Spitze (Lomniczi csúcs) (8642 feet), which, as it used to be considered the highest of all Carpathian summits, was the one which ambitious spirits used most frequently to scale. West of the Schlagendorfer Spitze and separated from it by the Felka Dale, is the still loftier Gerlsdorfer Spitze (Gertlachfalvi csúcs) (8721 feet), which has now ousted the Lomnitzer from

its old supremacy,[1] just as the great summit variously called by the Tibetans Lapchi Chang or Chomo Lungma has superseded Kangchenjunga as the highest mountain in the world. All three tops are visible from Schmecks, and in clear weather seem quite close, though it is nearly five good hours to the top of the Lomnitzer, and much more to that of the Gerlsdorfer. In point of difficulty they stand in the order in which they have been named. If anybody likes to compare Schmecks to Zermatt, to which it, in fact, bears no resemblance whatever, he may compare the Schlagendorfer Spitze to the Breithorn, being the easy trip which any one who merely wants to say he has been on the top of a big mountain will take, the Lomnitzer to Monte Rosa, more interesting as well as more difficult, and the Gerlsdorfer to the Matterhorn. Of course, the ascents are here far less numerous; perhaps not more than fifteen or twenty people achieve the Lomnitzer in a season, and possibly none at all the Gerlsdorfer.

For a long time both were believed to be inaccessible. Then some fifty years ago the Lomnitzer was scaled from the north-east. The expedition continued to be accounted difficult; people took two days to it, and slept out in the

[1] The German names are taken from the nearest villages below them on the south. Whether they had old Slovak names proper to themselves nobody seemed to know. There are some mountain countries in which the natives seem to have no names except for a very few conspicuous masses; there are others, such as Scotland and the English Lake country, where every eminence has a name among the shepherds and drovers.

woods under the shelter of some huge blocks of stone that they might resume the enterprise early in the morning. Now it is usually despatched in one day from Schmecks, five to six hours, exclusive of halts, being allowed for the climb, and nearly as much for the descent. But an active walker will find no great difficulty in getting to the top in four hours from Schmecks, and back again in three. You first mount through the forest to a point where a lovely view opens up over the Kohlbach Dale, and where consequently a restaurant in the Swiss cottage style has been erected by the Karpathen Verein, in front of which people sit and dine and sup in the open air all afternoon and evening. From this you descend into the Kohlbach valley, past its exquisite waterfalls, ascend its north-east arm for some distance to the foot of the peak, and then clamber up a steep and in places rocky slope to the crest of the ridge, where grass finally disappears. A little above this one finds the last drinkable water in what is called the Moses Spring. The Vice-President and another member of the Verein were, with their guides, conducting some members of the Vienna Alpine Club to the top of the Lomnitzer. These latter gentlemen, as coming from the lofty Austrian Alps, had been a little contemptuous towards the less elevated Tátra, and in fact pooh-poohed the Lomnitzer. However, the stiff climb up out of the Kohlbach Dale

tried them so severely, that on gaining the crest they declared they could go no farther without something to slake their thirst. This the Vice-President promised them at a spring a little higher up. Unhappily when they reached the spot no water was to be seen. The strangers began to reproach the Herr Major. But he was equal to the occasion. "Let us invoke Moses," said he, "who could bring water from the stony rock, and give him ten minutes within which to help us." Moses was accordingly invoked amid the jeers of the Viennese. Sure enough after ten minutes water began to trickle down the rocks, till before long a streamlet was running at which all could drink. The Major had observed that the sun in mounting above the rocks was just striking a snow-bed which lay hidden in a cleft some yards higher up, and he knew that when the heat had had time to play upon it water would presently appear. He was, therefore, not afraid to stake his reputation as an officer and a mountaineer upon the event. In memory whereof the spot is called by the guides and others the Moses Spring, even unto this day. The story goes on to add, that when the men from Vienna came to the difficult part of the ascent—a scramble up and across smooth rocks just below the last peak—they showed considerable disinclination to proceed farther, began to think the weather very uncertain, and would, indeed, have failed to reach

the summit at all but for the help which the Karpathen Verein men gave them. They have never since been heard to speak disrespectfully of the Tátra. This last scramble is a nice little bit of climbing for a party without a rope. With a rope it would be simple enough, but the rope is never used in the Zips. Lamentable to tell, there was talk of a scheme for spoiling one scramble by fixing iron clamps and chains in the rock, which will destroy the slight excitement one now has in getting across the slippery spots by sticking one's finger-nails and the tips of one's toes into chinks and crevices in the granite. The practice (now not uncommon in Switzerland) of thus chaining the mountains is certainly more efficacious than the device to which Xerxes resorted when he chained the sea by throwing several pairs of fetters into it. But it revolts a mountaineer's finer feelings; not to mention that it may some day, when the chains have rusted away, lead to a bad accident.

I shall not describe in further detail the ascent of the Lomnitzer Spitze, because we made another ascent more novel and far more interesting, that of the loftier Gerlsdorfer Spitze. And, indeed, I should be ashamed to add one more to the countless descriptions of ascents laid before the British public during the last twenty years, were it not that they mostly relate to snow slopes and glaciers, ice-walls, seracs, crevasses, bergschrunds, all which

things are utterly unknown in the Tátra. Moreover, though at least two distinguished mountaineers, Mr. John Ball and Mr. W. E. Forster, have visited Zips, neither of them—nor, so far as I know, any other Englishman—has described any of its peaks or passes. Let these be my excuses; but if any one has been sufficiently bored already by Alpine narratives, let him read no further.

The Gerlsdorfer Spitze rises immediately to the west of the beautiful Felka Dale, and its higher and more northerly top hangs over the pass, the Polnischer Kamm (described in the last preceding chapter), which leads from the valley into Galicia. This top, the loftiest in all Hungary, is 8721 feet above the sea. It was first ascended, about 1860, by some one whose name has perished, and again in 1872. These two ascents, and several which have been made subsequently, were made by reaching the lower or southerly top, and keeping along the ridge which connects it with the higher, a long and fatiguing excursion, for which eleven hours to go and ten to return are allowed. Three years ago two Slovak peasants living in the village of Stola, eight miles from Schmecks, discovered a new route to the summit, much shorter, much more interesting, and, although in parts more difficult or dangerous, still on the whole not so laborious. These Slovaks had taken one climber (Mr. Lorencz) to the top, but no one else. This roused our curiosity. As it

was a clear duty to ascend the highest Tátra peak, so it would be a decided gain to do so by a route needing less time and toil, and which nobody at Schmecks had traversed. The Major, exerting his authority as Vice-President, exhorted us to seize the opportunity of serving the Verein by exploring the new route, and desired us to take a German guide or two with us that they might learn the way, and be able to conduct future parties from Schmecks. Accordingly, we despatched a messenger to Stola with a letter to the schoolmaster there, who is also a sort of head of the village, asking him to send over to us the Slovak guide who knew the way up the Gerlsdorfer. In due time both the Slovaks who had made the ascent appeared. As they could not speak a word of any tongue but their own, our conversation with them was carried on through an obliging trilingual friend at New Schmecks. We asked one of them to come with us up the Gerlsdorfer, assuming that a poor peasant would jump at the offer. But they were too sharp for us. Only on two conditions would they consent, one being that they should both accompany us, and the other that no German should go with them. They valued their monopoly of the peak, and were not going to let a Schmecks guide of the rival race get in to oust them. As we should have been unable to communicate with them without the intervention of a German, and thought it

absurd to take three or four guides up a mountain like this, their conditions were promptly rejected; whereupon, with no appearance of disappointment, they shouldered their bundles and vanished. We then reverted to the German guides, proposing to one of them to come and find the way, since the Slovaks would not show it. But all the Germans demurred. The weather, said they, was bad, the expedition was a long one, the fact being that they did not like enterprise, being by no means first-rate climbers, inferior both to the Poles who had brought us over the pass from Zakopane from the north side of the Tátra, and to these Slovaks on whom they professed to look down.

So, after some days, when the time for our departure drew nigh, and it became plain that if we were to get up we must again try the Slovaks, my friend and I started off through the woods alone to Stola. It is a rude hamlet, standing in the cork-fields just below the forest, and thoroughly unlike the trim little villages of the Zipser Saxons. The wooden houses, though substantial, are built of rough logs; they stand all nohow, with seas of mud between them, equally dirty within and without. Against this is to be set the superior beauty of the people, for while the Saxon faces are heavy and tame, and the Saxon figures squat, the Slovak women are often well-favoured, with fresh colour in their cheeks and lips, large and liquid eyes, a mobile and sensitive expression. The school-

master occupies a house—the only stone house in the village—standing hard by the church, where he officiates every Sunday in the year except three, when the parson of the parish comes over from the mother-church of Botzdorf. He is a Protestant, a bright intelligent little man, with everything neat and cosy in his menage, the only man in Stola who can speak both German and Magyar. With his aid we rediscovered one of the two peasants who knew the way up the Gerlsdorfer Spitze. He showed no eagerness to come with us, but we felt the time had arrived for exerting our Teutonic will power. So we compelled him, for his own good and our own, to pack up his bundle and follow us. His companion was away from the village, and accordingly would have no ground for complaint. This guide's name was Ruman Jano, *i.e.* John Ruman, the Hungarian fashion of putting the Christian name after the surname being generally adopted by the Germans and Slavs in these parts. He was a slim, lithe little creature, with a strange wild eye, in whose keen twinkle slyness was mingled with humour. These Slovaks have a peculiar look which I can only describe by saying that as it is unlike that of any other race, so it is most of all unlike that of Teutons, even the comparatively simple and primitive Teutons of Tyrol or Norway. In the aspect of country folk in every Germanic country there is usually a basis of stolid common

sense, dull perhaps and slow, but still solid, firm and fixed; as there is often a keen shrewdness in that of the Celtic peasant. But the Slav gives you rather the feeling of a grown-up child, or some untamed forest creature. His look is mobile, flexile, wandering, with a dash of pathetic timidity, as if impulses and emotions were thrilling through him and determining his actions. Sensitiveness is the note of their faces, a sensitiveness which sometimes attracts and sometimes disquiets those who have to deal with them. That mystery of race, as some one calls it, which has been the source of so much misunderstanding and consequent strife between peoples, always seems to come out most strikingly when one watches the relations of Teutons and Slavs, and their incapacity to comprehend one another's minds. Between Frenchmen and Spaniards, or between Englishmen and Italians, there is also a contrast, but it is much less profound.

To return, however, to Ruman, whom we had carried off from his home with Teutonic masterfulness: we took him that night to the Csorba See, perhaps the prettiest of all the Tátra lakes, as it lies among gentle-wooded hills, with jagged peaks forming a noble background. We had already visited it some days before, riding to it through the woods with a party of Hungarian generals and countesses—in Hungary, nearly every lady is a countess—the men genial, like all

Hungarian men, the ladies charming, like all Hungarian ladies. They had ridden with a troop of attendants all the way to Schmecks from their castle, ten days' journey off in the plains, and were going to ride back again in the same fashion. Even in Hungary, which vies with England as the horse-rearing, horse-loving land, we had never seen finer animals, more handsome or more spirited, and they seemed as much at home in these rough woodland paths, among blocks of stone and fallen trunks, as on the vast levels of the Theiss. But on that day it had rained so steadily, and with so thick a fog, that even on the shores of the lake we could not see across it, much less enjoy the admirable views which it commands in all directions. In the evening the elements were more propitious, and the lake with its winding bays, its pine-crested promontories, and the romantic glens running up into the mountain behind, struck us as perhaps the most perfectly finished piece of landscape in all the Tátra, the spot where one would most wish to place oneself and explore at leisure the surrounding woods and dales. At present there is only a rude shelter-hut, one of those lately erected by the Verein, where one can just manage, at a pinch, to pass the night. This we did, and next morning mounted from it one of the highest and grandest summits of the Central Tátra, and were, when near the top, driven back to Schmecks by

a furious storm of wind and snow, destroying all chance of a view. The following morning promised so much better that soon after six we started for the Gerlsdorfer. The way lies for about an hour through the woods, then descends into the Felka Thal, crosses its stream, and mounting the farther slope, lands one on a wilderness of huge tumbled blocks, with here and there large patches of *Krummholz*, that dwarf creeping pine of which I have already spoken. Nothing more fatiguing than the passage across these blocks, so large that one has to clamber over them, so loose that one has to take the utmost care not to send them toppling down, can be imagined, except, indeed, the forcing one's way through the Krummholz. The South African bush is not worse, except, of course, when it consists of spiny cactus. You can get neither under the Krummholz, nor over it, nor through it. Its boughs lie so low that you cannot crawl beneath them, grow so close that you cannot squeeze between them, and send up so many vertical shoots that you cannot step above them. They are too tough to be broken or pushed aside, too flexible to bear you when you tread on them; it often takes an hour's hard work, with arms as well as legs, to get across half a mile of country, not to speak of the tattered condition in which you emerge. In fact, the existence of the Krummholz, forming a barrier all along the

mountain sides, between the pine forest below and the rock slopes above, is the chief obstacle to exploration in the Tátra, for since there are no pastures above, there are no sheep or cattle paths crossing the barrier. The greatest service the Club could render would be to cut such paths, and they would require frequent cuttings. After two laborious hours we found ourselves on the shore of a clear tarn, the Botzdorfer See, lying cold and solemn in a solitary alpine basin. It is open to the south, looking out over the smiling plain ; but north, west, and east, jagged ridges rise steeply from its surface, where only one small patch of greensward relieves the sternness of the scene. A rough scramble from the north-eastern extremity brought us to the foot of the Gerlsdorfer, where a big snow-bed lies immediately under a white wall of rock, up which, as we conjectured from Ruman's signs, the way lay. Our work was evidently cut out for us. This rock wall is whitened and polished like marble by a brook which descends over it out of a cleft behind. It is a pleasant little bit of climbing to mount it, along the narrow ledges which traverse its face, till you get behind into the cleft where the stream, fed by the snows above, comes down in miniature waterfalls. Up the stream bed, sometimes in the water itself, we followed the nimble Ruman, though not without difficulty, for the rocks are very steep and give little foothold. He had thrown off the white

woollen blanket coat which all Slovaks wear, and taken off his sandal-like slippers also to climb more easily. Then he stopped, gazed about him from side to side, tried up the main or right branch of the gully a little way, turned back, and began to cross horizontally an exceedingly steep and smooth sheet of granite to which we should have thought nothing but a cat could cling. This sheet of rock abutted at the top on a cliff running across it and cutting us off from the higher slopes of the mountain, while to the left, in the direction Ruman was taking, it ended on the great rock wall which we knew fell sheer down on the basin we had quitted. It was therefore hard to see where the path lay, and we began, not liking, I must confess, the look of this granite sheet, to doubt whether Ruman had not mistaken his way. He had been looking about with a doubtful air to right and left. Was it not because he had forgotten the place by which he had mounted before, and was now leading us at random? It might be quite possible for him, a light man with sinewy limbs and bare feet, to wriggle along this smooth face and up one of the crevices in the cliff above; but could we, with nail-studded boots, heavier bodies to lift, amateur legs and arms, and not much confidence either in him or ourselves, hope to follow? A rope would have gone far to solve the difficulty, only there was no rope. A few questions to him as to how we were to get

over or round the cliff might have satisfied us. But not a word could we exchange, and his vehement speeches fell upon our ears with no more meaning than the cries of the mountain crows that fluttered round. In this extremity one of us recollected that the Russian word *dobra* means "good," and even a slight knowledge of Slavonic philology sufficed to suggest that it might have the same meaning in Slovak. Accordingly, we pointed to the gully to the right, which looked a trifle easier than the place he was making for, and said, interrogatively, "Dobra?" He shook his head violently, with another volley of words. Then remembering that in Polish *niet* means "no," we pointed to the spot he indicated, and shook our heads, saying, "Niet dobra." All to no purpose, for he only beckoned us on more earnestly. Upon this I followed cautiously across the smooth face of rock, where there was really little, except the friction of the body laid against the slope, to prevent one from slipping away down, and hoisted myself up it to a point from which one could see that at the top, where the transverse cliff came out to the edge of the great precipice falling down to the valley, there was an exceedingly narrow ledge, from which it might be just possible to scale the end of the cliff, and thus get on to the upper region of the mountain. However, it looked so unattractive that when I got down again back to

where my friend was carefully surveying the right-hand gully, we concluded that it could not be the route described by Mr. Lorencz in the account of his ascent which we possessed, and that Ruman, having somehow lost his way, was trying this course at random. We therefore made another effort to get him to attempt the other gully. When he refused, we descried a steep little *cheminée* (narrow chimney-like hollow) immediately above the spot where we stood (or rather hung on), and urged him with cries of "Dobra" to try up that way. This time he consented, and we followed. Though he climbed like a squirrel, clinging with his long fingers and bare feet to rock faces that looked like the wall of a house, this *cheminée* gave him some little trouble. However, he squeezed himself up, planting his back against one side and working with hands and feet against the other. We mounted a good way, and then halted. It would not perhaps have been impossible to reach the top, though what had bothered him might well have been hopeless for us. But in mountain climbing there is something more and something worse to be thought of than getting up, to wit, getting down. Whether we could have got down that *cheminée* without either a rope or broken bones was to us then, and is still, a very doubtful question. Thus prudence prevailed, and our ascent of the Gerlsdorfer Spitze appeared to have reached a sudden and shameful conclusion.

We reflected severely on our folly in bringing a guide with whom we could not communicate, and who had no idea of guiding except going on in front, and in not bringing a rope, which would in such a place have made all the difference. We noticed that the weather was ominous; showers of sleet glooming over the peaks, with thunder rattling in the distance. Could we honestly persuade ourselves that it would be useless to go on in such weather? Nearly an hour had been lost at this spot in these various reconnoitrings and flank movements, and poor Ruman, who could be discerned peering like a hawk over the top of the cliff, was visibly unhappy. Was it not possible that we were wronging him, and that he really had brought us, notwithstanding his hesitations, by the right way? We should not have shrunk from trying the course he indicated, however unpromising, if we really believed it to be the one he had followed before. Impossible to turn back without giving him and ourselves another chance; impossible, with the honour of England in our hands, to face Schmecks and the Major. We called and beckoned to Ruman. He descended, not through the *cheminée*, but farther to the left, apparently by the ledge I have already mentioned. We pushed ourselves towards him along the granite sheets which lay at so high an angle that it was only by pressing the body firmly against the rock, as well as by forcing the toes into little

crevices, that we could avoid slipping off to the bottom of the ravine. When we had reached him, we demanded once more if the ledge were "dobra." He nodded affirmatively with more vehemence than ever. A few minutes' cautious clambering brought us to the very brink of the precipice, where the granite sheet against which we lay broke away to the valley beneath, a mural precipice of four or five hundred feet. Here, where the cliff which had stopped our ascent up the gully, turning us off to the left of the rock-sheets, ran out on to the precipice, there was left between the cliff and the abyss a little horizontal ledge which looked just big enough for a man to stand on, his face touching the rocks and the ends of his heels sticking out into space. (It proved to be an inch or two wider than this, but I describe it as it looked from below.) Ruman mounted on this ledge, went from it up the face of the cliff like a cat, and beckoned us to follow. The height of the cliff was at this point about twelve feet, and the hand-hold good; places as nasty on the Schreckhorn or Weisshorn are traversed gaily ever summer. Still, a rope would have been welcome; for though one might find the work in front manageable, it was not easy to forget the yawning gulf behind. Imagination is the climber's great enemy, when he cannot help thinking of what is behind as well as of what is in front. However, up we went, Ruman giving

us a hand from above. When, fairly at the top, we stopped and looked in one another's faces, the absurdity of the situation, our doubts as to this poor fellow and the existence of his route, his utter perplexity at our hesitancy, his chattering in an unknown tongue, and our ringing the changes upon "dobra," finally our own strange heedlessness in trying to scale a troublesome mountain without any means of communication, struck us so forcibly that we broke into peals of laughter, which puzzled him more than all that had gone before. After that we never questioned his directions, but followed implicitly, even when our own judgement would have suggested some easier course.

From this point, which is the crux of the mountain, it was a comparatively simple, though steep, rough, and fatiguing scramble of nearly two thousand feet, which took about an hour, to the top. You cross several small snow-fields, and climb for a long way up the stony margin of one which lies so steeply inclined in a deep gully that it would be unsafe to venture on it without a rope and ice-axes. It was amusing to contrast Ruman's extreme caution on the snow slopes, where neither his bare feet nor the slippers which he sometimes put on could take hold, so that we had sometimes to give him a helping hand, with the airy way in which he had danced about on difficult rocks. No chamois could have

been more at home. Of chamois, by the way, we saw two large herds, one numbering ten and the other seventeen, upon the rocks not far above us, and could have had excellent shots more than once. They are seldom or never disturbed here; when a hunt is organised, it is usually on the easier ground of the Schlagendorfer Spitze to the east. The scenery of this upper region of the mountain is intensely savage, and so is the near view from the summit, which we gained about 1 P.M. Around on every side there tower up countless spires and pinnacles of naked rock, capping a maze of narrow ridges with apparently inaccessible sides, all of them nearly as lofty as the point you stand on, and all of the same grim, rain-blackened granite. Such wildness, such grimness, I do not remember to have ever seen in the Alps. There the soft mantle of snow lapping the base of the rocks, and spreading out into broad basins, refreshes the beholder with a sense of undulating grace. Even a steep snow-slope or ice-wall, terrible as it may be to the mind which knows its perils, has a grace of contour, a furry tenderness of surface, a pearly play of light and colour where the sun strikes its crystals, a loveliness of hue in its blue and violet shadows, which make the eye dwell on it with pleasure and content. But here you feel only a fierce monotony of desolation: rugged slopes, harsh outlines, cruel teeth of rock rising all around

to threaten you out of a dark grey wilderness. It was a relief to cut off with one's hand this dismal foreground, and look beyond it over the rich valleys of Northern Hungary, villages and cornfields, and swelling wood-clothed hills, or northwards across the deeper forests of Galicia, away to the great plain that stretches unbroken to the Baltic and the Ural Mountains.

The descent was accomplished with no more incidents than an ugly slip or two; the passage of the cliff and ledge proved easier than we had expected, and in less than two hours from the top we were disporting ourselves in the bright waters of the Botsdorf lake. Here we parted with Ruman, whose volubility, though paralysed for the moment by our incomprehensible conduct in jumping into the icy lake, revived more than ever when we took leave. To judge from the gesticulation which supplied a sort of running commentary, he was exhorting us to return and go up sundry other peaks in his company, indicating those which we should find the toughest. However, what his purport was will never be known now. We would gladly have trusted ourselves to him anywhere on rocks. A peasant of Val di Zoldo, not a guide but a chamois hunter, once took me up the Sasso di Pelmo, along a level ledge nowhere wider than two feet, and sometimes narrower, with a precipice of two thousand feet below and another of a thousand feet above

just as well as Melchior Anderegg of Meyringen could have done.

Ruman went on his way rejoicing down to Stola, which lies seven miles off immediately below the Botzdorf lake, while we turned our faces Schmecks-ward, across the weary waste of stones and *Krummholz*. Stopping frequently to enjoy the sunset, we did not get near home till night was falling, and once more lost our way in the woods, wandering about quite close to the houses for nearly an hour till we descried a light. The whole expedition requires, according to the Schmecks authorities, sixteen hours. But this is the calculation of Germans, who, though they are sure, are also undeniably slow. A nimble British walker, wishing to save every moment, might quite well get to the top and back in eleven hours, while a Slovak sprite like Ruman might accomplish it in nine.

Those who come hereafter from England to Zips may think that I have given, in some respects, a too highly coloured picture of the attractions of Zips. Let no one go thither who is not prepared to rough it. Schmecks (though clean) is not luxurious; and outside Schmecks even passable accommodation is not to be had. At Schmecks itself the excursions, except a very few short and easy ones, are only fit for an active pedestrian; so that a lazy man might find it monotonous, especially as he will have nobody

to talk to unless he talks either German or Hungarian. The experienced devotee of the Swiss or Tyrolese or Italian Alps will hardly be consoled by the excellence of the rock-climbing for the absence of his favourite snow and ice. But, on the other hand, I have not spoken—the guide-book will do that—of other things that are well worth doing or seeing. Many excursions have been omitted which deserve description, as, for instance, the famous Ice Cave at Dobschau, some twenty-three miles from Schmecks; Kesmark, a quaint little Saxon city, with the ruins of the noble old castle of the Counts Tököly; the descent of the rapids of the Dimojec, not to speak of the smaller and less notable expeditions. Nor do these pages, when I look over them, seem fully to convey a sense of the delicious freshness and wildness of the scenery, with its magnificent rock-peaks rising out of its sombre forests; still less perhaps of the charm which the simple, free and easy Hungarian life, the frank and hearty manners of the people, have for any one who can find himself in sympathy with them. Nowhere in the European continent does an Englishman feel himself more at home. After a few weeks among the Magyars one can enter into the spirit of the national adage—an adage which a late respected missionary (a staid old Scotsman, sent to Pesth by the Society for the Conversion of the Jews) whose persistence in

the duty he was charged with did not check his enjoyment of general society, is said to have been fond of repeating :

"Extra Hungariam non est vita,
Vel si quidem est, non est ita."

SUVAROFF'S ALPINE CAMPAIGN (1884)

For a century and a half the Alps have been the resort of those who seek health and rest, as well as of lovers of scenery, and especially of that form of scenery to which danger adds the delight of excitement. These attractions have proved so strong that Swiss scenery is perishing at the hands of the attracted crowds, or rather of those who build for their convenience cog-wheel railways and monster hotels. Nevertheless, as there are still valleys even in the Swiss and Tyrolese Alps where one can escape from crowds, so, similarly, there are—much as has been written about the Alps by men of science and historians—some fields of study, some subjects of permanent interest neglected by the vast majority of those who visit the Alps. There is the Government and political life of Switzerland, in every respect more instructive to one who seeks to know how self-government works in practice than are the politics of any other Continental country. There is also the military history of the mountain passes. A long controversy has been carried on regarding the route by which Hannibal brought his elephants

over the snows at the beginning of the Second Punic War, but very little has been written in English about the marches and battles, of the hosts that crossed the Alps since Drusus led the legions of Augustus against Rhaetian tribes, and the later days when Alboin, king of the Lombards, pointed out to his fierce tribesmen from the north of Aquileia those fertile plains of Italy which were to be the seat of their kingdom.

Of all these invasions, of the marches of Charlemagne and his successors, the Germanic Emperors of the Middle Ages, hardly a record has come down to us. But there was one short campaign of extraordinary interest in the very heart of Switzerland, of which very few of those who throng the hotels and sail the lakes and climb the mountains know anything more than the name. It was the campaign of the Russian Suvaroff in September and October 1799. The military histories, or at least those written in our language, say very little about the physical features of the routes which the Russians followed, and nothing at all about their scenic aspects; while the guide-books—such as Baedeker and Murray, and the excellent Alpine Guide published by the Alpine Club, which in England we call by the honoured name of its first compiler, the late Mr. John Ball—dismiss with the briefest mention the exploits and sufferings of the Russian and French armies. Having many years ago followed the line of

Suvaroff's march from Airolo at the south foot of the St. Gotthard to Ilanz in the valley of the Vorder Rhein, over four high passes, I have thought it worth while to supply from personal observation some details which the historian curious in these matters may like to possess.

First of all, a word about Suvaroff himself. He is the only great commander Russia has produced, far more brilliant than Kutusov and Barclay de Tolly showed themselves in 1812, and at least the equal of the many famous European generals of his time excepting, of course, Napoleon and Wellington. He was an extraordinary being, diverging widely in some respects from what we take to be the normal Russian type, yet recalling that even more extraordinary Russian, the Tsar Peter the Great. He had the same intense ardour in mastering what he studied, and the same tremendous energy in carrying out his purposes; swift and bold in the field, sometimes bold to the verge of rashness, he was skilful in laying his strategic plans, and quick in changing them when a new emergency arose. He was, however, less sensual and less ferocious than Peter, for the charges brought against him of cruelty in Poland, and of brutality at the capture of Ismail, seem to have been disproved. He was vain, sometimes so vain as to insist on keeping out of the limelight in order that his superiority to those who desired to be in it might be made manifest. With a

self-esteem that put him above jealousy of other generals, he had a boundless admiration for Nelson, perhaps discovering in himself some likeness to the naval hero with whom he exchanged complimentary letters. Totally indifferent to appearances, and even to decorum as well as to physical comfort, he valued and enjoyed his own oddities. He used to ride at the head of his troops in a rough linen shirt with neither a coat nor a cloak. On a campaign, whatever preparations had been made to give him snug night quarters, nothing would serve him to sleep on but a truss of hay. These and other eccentricities helped, as he doubtless knew, to endear him to his soldiers, whom he treated with constant familiarity. As he asked much from them, he gave them an example not only of courage, but of a readiness to share all their hardships. They worshipped him and responded to every appeal he made, and this all the more because he was eminently devout and passionately patriotic.

In the spring and summer of 1799 Suvaroff, operating from the east, and commanding the united Russian-Austrian forces, had driven the French armies out of Lombardy and Piedmont up to the foot of the Alps, almost as quickly as Bonaparte, three years before, operating from the west, had driven out the Austrians, chasing them over the Carnic and Dinaric Alps. Suvaroff might probably have annihilated the French alto-

gether although Moreau was his opponent, for the Directory had sent a large body of their troops off to Naples and recalled them too late. But the jealousy and perverseness of the Austrian Government at Vienna refused Suvaroff's requests and hampered his action by their foolish instructions. They had their own political game to play. They coveted Lombardy for themselves and feared the presence in it of their masterful ally, who outshone their own commanders. Many as were the faults and follies of all the Great Powers since the Partition of Poland in 1776, none of them showed such persistent ineptitude as did the Hapsburgs down to their fall in 1918. They never seemed able to profit by experience, to show confidence, or to inspire it. Suvaroff fretted and fumed and snorted and remonstrated, but in vain. His ambition was, now that he had driven the French armies of the Republic out of Italy, to lead his army across the Alps and rescue France from those whom he called "the frivolous and conceited atheists," who ruled her. Clovis the Frank, himself only just converted, alleged a religious motive for his desire that the Arians should no longer possess the fairest part of Gaul. But Suvaroff was a devoted son of the Orthodox Church, and piety as well as glory beckoned him on. All in vain. The Austrians wished to have only their own troops in Lombardy, and to secure South Germany against the Republicans. Their

Government persuaded the Russian Government to join in directing Suvaroff to march northwards across the St. Gotthard Pass and join his army with the Austrian forces under the Archduke Charles, and the Russian forces under Korsakoff, which were confronting the French under Massena in Central Switzerland. All the belligerents had entered the territory of the unlucky Confederation, and the Allies now sought to thrust the French out. Zürich, where Korsakoff had his headquarters, was to be the rendezvous.

Suvaroff reluctantly obeyed. Starting from Tortona on 11th September 1799 with an army of 22,000 men, he reached Airolo at the foot of the St. Gotthard on 24th September, attacked the French detachment which had recently occupied it, and forced them back up the pass. Few people nowadays know the road over the St. Gotthard, since the tunnel was made under the mountain which provides the shortest as well as the most beautiful route from Western Germany into Italy, and no one thinks of driving or walking over the top. In 1799 though there was only a horse track there was a great deal of traffic. The summit of the pass, which is 6935 feet above tide water, and 3180 feet above Airolo, is a broad open grassy hillside, steep in parts, but not precipitous, and not narrowed at the top by converging cliffs. There was plenty of space for skirmishers to fight and the French fought well, firing steadily on the mount-

ing Russians. They were, however, inferior in number and, as the British troops who held the top of Majuba Hill in 1881 found to their cost, it is easier to take good aim at men above you than to aim below. The edge of the tabular top of Majuba is more exposed than is any point on the St. Gotthard slope, and in 1881 the range of rifle-fire was much longer than it was in 1799, when the old musket carried about two hundred yards, and "sights" were unknown. Still, the principle held good even then. The French made a good stand at the top, but in the second charge, when a Russian detachment which had climbed round the hill appeared on their left flank, they gave way in confusion, hotly pursued down the upper valley of the Reuss, past Andermatt, till they halted at the gorge of the Devil's Bridge. Here they made a stand, for the position was formidably strong for defence. The river roars down in a series of cataracts through an extremely narrow ravine, bordered by sharp cliffs. The path led through a tunnel, the Urner Loch (the "Cave of Uri"), and a single French cannon swept it from end to end. The Russian skirmishers climbing along the steep slopes above, at last compelled the French to retire across the narrow bridge, but the latter broke it down[1] as they retired, and maintained a deadly fire from the farther bank,

[1] Mr. Douglas Freshfield thinks that an arch leading to the bridge was blown up in previous fighting between the French and the Austrians. The old bridge was standing sixty years ago.

till Russians who had found a way across the torrent higher up, appeared behind them, forcing them to hurry down the glen, past Göschenen, where now is the northern entrance to the great tunnel through which the St. Gotthard railway passes, and down into the broader valley of the Reuss beneath, scarcely halting, for their pursuers followed close on their heels, till they reached Altdorf, twenty miles below, and a mile farther, the shimmering levels of the Lake of Luzern.

The Reussthal is one of the finest valleys of the Alps, a noble vista when one looks up it from the north, walled in by lofty peaks among which the majestic peak of the Bristenstock reigns supreme, and it is beautiful everywhere, with lovely glens branching out from it on either side, studded with villages standing in bright pastures, with orchards and cornfields beside the rushing Reuss, a valley which delighted the traveller who walked or drove up it in old days, but which the passenger by rail has no time to enjoy as he is whirled along in express train from Basel to Milan. But in those days few people cared for mountain scenery, and in war one has no time to think of beauty. The Russians sped along in high spirits for, though they had lost heavily at the Devil's Bridge, they had received on the way down reinforcements of eight thousand men from Russians and Austrians coming from the east by other routes, and they might well think that their

chief difficulties had been overcome when they had crossed the central range of the Alps and saw in front of them the lower hills through which easy roads led to Luzern and Zürich. But at Altdorf a frightful disappointment awaited them. Suvaroff found, what the inconceivable incompetence of the Austrian Staff officers detailed as his advisers had failed to tell him of, that there was no road northwards along the lake by which he could proceed to keep his tryst at Zürich. The southernmost arm of the Lake of Luzern, called the Bay of Uri, is walled in by lofty precipices which on the eastern shore descend vertically into its deep waters. Some years ago an excellent road was made from Brunnen to Altdorf along this eastern shore, cut out on a shelf in the limestone cliffs, and forty years ago the St. Gotthard railway line was hewn out along the very edge of the lake on the same side. But at that date the precipices descended right into the lake, leaving no room even for a footpath. All communications between Altdorf and Brunnen, the nearest village on the lake-shore, ten miles distant, were by water, or else by steep and difficult hill tracks, impossible for artillery or cavalry, along and through a maze of crags. He who has read Schiller's drama of *William Tell* will remember that when Gessler carried off Tell after the scene of the boy and the apple and the crossbow at Altdorf, he is obliged to take his prisoner with him in a boat, a violent

squall raises high waves, and Tell is released from his bonds to save the party from death. He suddenly steers the boat close to the rocks, jumps ashore, and disappears, lost in the crags and bushes, while the boat is swept away by the wind. As things had been in the fourteenth century, so they remained at the end of the eighteenth—Suvaroff's march was stopped dead, he had walked into a *cul de sac*. There was no flotilla of boats to meet him and convey him to Luzern—indeed all the boats on the lake would not have sufficed to carry even a small fraction of his army—and the French had carried off all the boats at Flüelen, the port on the lake below Altdorf, so he could not send to Korsakoff any news of his approach and the plight in which he found himself. What was he to do? Proud of never having had to retreat before an enemy, and resolved not to ruin the campaign by failing to keep tryst with the Russians at Zürich, he decided with his usual promptitude, and that sense of the value of time which Bonaparte possessed and despised the Austrian generals for not possessing, to advance at once by land, whatever the difficulties. Since he would not go back over the St. Gotthard, three routes to Zürich were available. One, up the Maderaner Thal, was difficult and roundabout. The second, up the Schächen Thal to Stachelberg in the Upper Linth Thal, south of Glarus, was possible, for the Klausen Pass which it crosses is

only 6417 feet high, and lies entirely over pastures. As things ultimately turned out, it would have been his best course, for Glarus was soon to become the objective point of the Russian army. But Suvaroff, to use the Duke of Wellington's favourite phrase, did not know what was on the other side of the hill. Events were happening at Zürich, the news of which had not yet reached him. So he chose the most direct way to Zürich, by which he might most quickly succeed in falling upon Massena's rear. This was over the Kinzig Kulm, which, crossing a ridge 6791 feet high, leads down into the Muota Thal, and thence to the more open country northwards by the town of Schwyz.

The Kinzig Kulm is what the less poetical members of the Alpine Club used to call a "cow col," an open stretch of pasture, like the southern side of the St. Gotthard, fairly smooth, parts of it slippery in wet weather, but nowhere steep or difficult, except at the top, where a low ridge of limestone, abrupt in places, runs across it from one hill-side to the other, and needs a little climbing. The pass is now little used, because the high road and the railway along the lake furnish a quicker and easier way from Schwyz to Altdorf; and the views, though fine on the ascent when one looks back at the Reuss valley and across it to the Rothstock and the grand peaks that surround it, are not of exceptional merit in a

region everywhere beautiful. It may have been a worse road in 1799, yet it nowhere offers any real difficulties to infantry. The guide books—Baedeker, Murray, and Berlepsch—say that by it the pedestrian may reach Muota from Altdorf in nine hours. Walking leisurely my friend and I did it in eight, but we had nothing to carry, and neither Suvaroff nor his poor Russians had ever seen a hill in their lives till they marched over the Karst behind Trieste down into Italy. The historians say that the beasts of burden "fell on the sharp points of granite," but in point of fact there is not a bit of granite rock within many miles of the Kinzig. In those days people used to call every hard rock granite, just as now there are tourists who, when they see a symmetrically conical mountain, are apt to call it a volcano.

The Russians started on the morning of 27th September, entering the Schächen Thal at Burglen, where the legendary site of William Tell's house is still pointed out, and then, turning south up the pass, climbed in single file the long slope. This made progress so slow that when the vanguard reached Muota, the rear had not yet left Altdorf. No rest had been given them since they mounted the St. Gotthard six days before, and their march was harassed by the French, who had sallied out from Seedorf to hang upon their rear. They lost many horses and had to abandon part of their already diminished artillery, for speed was vital. Late in

the evening the first Cossacks, always sent on in advance, reached Muota Thal, but the rearguard did not come up with them till two days later. They had been harassed by the French, who, emerging from Brunnen to which they had retired at the south-west corner of the lake, attacked the rear and captured the stragglers.

When Suvaroff reached Muota Thal fortune dealt him another terrible blow. He was confronted by a large French force strongly posted in a gorge of the valley. On the very day when Suvaroff had reached Altdorf, Korsakoff, weakened by the departure of the Austrian allies under the Archduke Charles, and defeated by Massena in the great battle of Zürich, had broken out of that city with the remains of his troops, hastened to the Rhine, and crossed it. Massena was therefore in a position to close all the exits by which Suvaroff could issue from the mountains to the open country. Besides holding Schwyz, he had sent round forces to seize the mouth of the Linth Thal, where there were Austrian detachments, some of which were driven back, while others, knowing nothing of Suvaroff's movements, retired over the mountains to the east. The French were on three sides of the Russian army, in front of them at Schwyz, behind them on the other side of the Kinzig Kulm, and stopping the only other outlet, that which led over the Pragel Pass to Glarus and the Linth Thal. Thus Suvaroff

was trapped for a second time, with wearied troops and diminished supplies. Twice he tried to fight his way out down the gorge to Schwyz. Twice the strength of the position and the numbers of the enemy baffled him. Most commanders would have thought the situation desperate and prepared to surrender. But the dauntless old hero had in his dictionary no such word as surrender. Since he could not force the Muota ravine he would turn back and try the Pragel.

The Pragel Pass is lower and easier than either the St. Gotthard or the Kinzig Kulm. Its watershed is only 5602 feet above the sea. The slopes nearly all the way up and down are easy ; the path, practicable for horses, leads over undulating pastures with comparatively few rocks and stones, and the valley is in most places wide enough to enable an assailant to overcome the resistance of an enemy inferior in strength. Walking over the pass, we found it, as well as the Muota Thal, more beautiful than would be gathered from the descriptions in Ball's Guide, usually as judicious in its estimates of scenery as it is accurate in points of fact. But it commands no distant view, and has no striking features till at its west end, descending towards the Linth Thal, one reaches a charming lake in the part of the valley called the Klönthal, under the magnificent grey precipices, capped by snowfields, of the huge Glärnisch. Here, at a spot called Voranen, there used to be a good inn and

Kurhaus, but it was burnt down in 1883, and has not, so far as I know, been rebuilt. So we found the place unusually solitary, though within two hours' drive of a railway. Sending before him his favourite and most efficient lieutenant, Bagration (a scion of an ancient and famous Armenian family), to drive the French back over the Pragel, Suvaroff followed on 1st October. The French fought hard in the ravine below the Klönsee, but Bagration drove them out, past Glarus and down the Linth Thal to Näfels, where a fresh struggle took place. The Russians tried to force their way to the valley in which lies the Lake of Wallenstalt in order to pass along its shores to Ragatz in the valley of the Rhine. But the French, to whom Massena had sent reinforcements, held their ground firmly, and Suvaroff, now in Glarus, perceiving it impossible to break through by the Linth Valley, had once more to consider how to escape from this third trap. The French had followed him over the Pragel and were now behind him to the west as well as in front of him at Näfels. Winter was coming on apace; the provisions which Glarus and the confined valley of the Linth could supply would soon be exhausted. He could not retreat by the way he had come, he could not break through in front against strongly posted and superior forces, he could not possibly stay where he was. Nothing remained but to make for the Rhine valley over

some one of the passes loftier and more difficult than the Kinzig Kulm which lead thither from Glarus. Of the three passes possible he chose the Panixer, and his passage across it is the most extraordinary part of this extraordinary campaign. It is now seldom traversed by tourists, although largely used by the peasantry for taking cattle from the Grisons to the more populous northern parts of Switzerland, and is approached through a valley singularly secluded, quiet, and primitive. The inn in the village of Elm was simple but comfortable, and the innkeeper a man remarkably intelligent even for East Switzerland, with whom I had an interesting conversation on Cantonal government and the Landesgemeinde or local popular assembly. All this was in 1884. When I asked him whether it was not the case that every citizen had the right to speak and vote in the assembly, he answered, "It is not so much their right as their duty." In no part of the world can a peasantry be found better educated, more industrious, and more intelligently interested in their own local government than in such Cantons as Glarus, Appenzell, Neuchâtel, and in the Bernese Oberland.

The path starts from this village—a spot rendered famous by the great mountain fall which took place there in 1882, destroying part of the hamlet, killing many persons and covering a large tract of good land with stones and rubbish, a

dismal sight. For about three miles there is a gentle ascent along the stream of the Sernft, a tributary of the Linth, in quiet pastoral scenery. Then the path turns sharply to the south and mounts by zigzags, passing at one place along a slope covered with loose stones which have fallen from the cliffs above and lie at an angle high enough to make it difficult to keep one's footing upon them after a fall of snow. After three hours' walking, rough but not very steep, one enters a narrow hollow between savage cliffs, the bottom of which remains in some parts covered with snow all the year round. Streamlets descend into it to form a shallow pond without any visible exit. It must be drained by some subterranean channel. Then another ascent over rough and slippery rock slopes brings one to the summit (7897 feet), and the traveller's efforts are rewarded by a panoramic view of the main chain of the Rhaetic Alps, a line of snow-clad peaks beyond the valley of the Vorder Rhein.

This was the task the Russians found before them. It is easy enough for an active pedestrian, on a fine long day in August, with well-soled boots and alpenstock, a guide to carry his knapsack, and plenty of food in his pockets. But the soldiers were already half starved, they carried muskets and ammunition as well as knapsacks, and they were pressed in the rear by the French, who had followed them up from Glarus, cutting

off stragglers and pouring in fire from behind the rocks. It was already October, and a three days' storm had covered the upper slopes with two feet of snow, through which they plunged wearily where it was soft, and down whose slopes they rolled where it was hard. Those who were forced to bivouac on the way up tried to make fires with their muskets, and the peasant from Elm who accompanied us over the pass pointed out a spot beside the snow-fed pond where the charred remains of musket stocks were to be seen not very long ago. Many must have perished of cold and fatigue in this hollow before reaching the summit. On the first part of the descent the chief difficulty was the extreme steepness of the declivity, for on this side the snow was frozen hard, and men and horses found it hard to keep their footing. Lower down, some two thousand feet below the summit, the valley bottom, which up to that point had been tolerably smooth, ends abruptly in a precipice about two hundred feet high, which, running from side to side, completely cuts off further descent. Below this a second range of still loftier cliffs crosses the valley, forming a sort of amphitheatre of crags round the alp or mountain pasture above the village of Panix. The path, since it can find no exit by keeping to the bottom of the valley, turns at a right angle to the left, crosses by a frail footbridge the narrow gorge in which the stream flows, and climbs the

eastern side of the valley for some five or six hundred feet, till it reaches a sort of ledge or shelf, along which it is carried above that amphitheatre of crags of which we have spoken, and below another towering precipice of limestone. It then emerges on a wide stretch of pasture, after which the descent to Panix and the Rhine valley presents no serious difficulty. A traveller coming down in broad daylight would be sorely perplexed to find his way, and though he might by care avoid falling over the cliffs, he would not easily discover the track along the ledge. But it was only the advanced guard of the Russian army that got across in the daylight, or had the help of guides. All signs of the path were, of course, obliterated by the snow. Those who came behind went stumbling along in the darkness as they best could. When they reached the point where the valley bottom breaks away in precipices, many, not knowing that the path turned off, went straight on, fell over the cliffs, and perished. Those who were warned off by the fate of their comrades turned to the left, but many, missing the bridge, or pressed on by the crowd behind them, were dashed to pieces in the gorge of the river. For many years afterwards piles of bones might be seen at the foot of this terrible cliff, mingled with fragments of small-arms and abandoned guns. How large a part of the army perished by this death, or from hunger and

exposure, the authorities do not record, but it was a greatly diminished, as well as a famished, weary, ragged horde that gathered at Suvaroff's head-quarters at Ilanz on the Rhine, five days after the vanguard had quitted Elm. The loss was even more severe in horses than in men, yet some succeeded in crossing; and to this day the people in the upper valley of the Vorder Rhein, between Ilanz and Disentis, declare that a peculiar breed of horses which exists there is sprung from the Cossack steeds of Suvaroff's army. It is a breed much esteemed, and does a great deal of the summer tourist work not only of the Rhine Valley, but of Canton Uri.

From Ilanz Suvaroff moved leisurely down to Chur, and a few weeks afterwards retired, first to winter quarters in South Germany, then home to Russia. The plan of the campaign had been so bad that the disasters which it brought about seem not greater than might have been expected by any accustomed to calculate the chances of war. The blame for its faults rests probably more with the Austrians than with Suvaroff; the credit for the courage and tenacity which averted utter ruin belongs wholly to the Russian chief and his indomitable troops. They were ill-found in provisions, entirely unaccustomed not only to mountains, but to skirmishing and the other operations which belong to mountain warfare. They had little artillery, and that of the lightest

order; their cavalry was only an encumbrance. Yet their resolution never quailed, and whenever they got the chance of crossing bayonets with the enemy, save only at the bridge of Näfels, they drove him before them. Suvaroff was sixty-nine years of age, and died soon after; but he marched at the head of the column, and shared the privations of the common soldier. A more skilful tactician would perhaps have refused to undertake a plan with so many risks of failure; but there have been few commanders in history who could by simple force of character and influence over their troops have rescued an army from such perils.

The ordinary historians of the period tell us singularly little about these wonderful marches. Thiers is sketchy and slight; Alison is meagre and dull. By far the best account we have been able to discover in English is that contained in General Shadwell's book, *Mountain Warfare*, which contains a translation of the Swiss narrative of the campaign compiled principally from the works of the Archduke Charles and of Jomini. The lover of the Alps, as well as the student of military history, will find its concise and lucid narrative full of interest.[1]

Three reflections suggested by the narrative of this extraordinary campaign deserve concise mention.

[1] A more detailed narration is furnished in *Der Zug Suvaroff's durch die Schweiz*, by Lieut.-Colonel R. von Reding Biberegg, Stans, 1895.

One is the effect which the inspiration and example of a commander can produce on an army. The Russian soldier has long been known to possess a remarkable power of resistance. He will stand unshaken under the fiercest attacks. He will bear hardships as men of few other races will. He will even keep his ranks and be killed by fire which he has not the arms to return, because the negligence or corruption of his generals has not provided them. But he has been supposed to lack dash and that *élan* which carries troops forward against formidable obstacles. That these qualities were displayed by the army of Suvaroff must be ascribed to their devotion to his person and their unbounded confidence in his courage and judgement. Where even French, or German, or Spanish armies—for let us remember that at one time the Spanish infantry was accounted the best in Europe—might have been demoralised by the situation in which the Russians found themselves when after crossing the Kinzig Kulm they were hemmed in on three sides by forces stronger than their own; or again, when with numbers sadly reduced and much artillery lost, they had to fight at Glarus—the aid they had expected cut off by the defeat of their brethren at Zürich and the retreat of their Austrian allies—nothing less than the prestige of their chief and the affection they bore him could have saved them.

Secondly, think what a difference in the conduct

of war has been made by the inventions of modern science. Had Suvaroff or Korsakoff possessed aircraft each could have informed the other of his situation. Suvaroff would have announced from Airolo or Altdorf his approach. Korsakoff might have so altered his dispositions as to avoid defeat, or withdrawn to some point where his presence would have prevented Massena from devoting all his efforts to the destruction of Suvaroff. Suvaroff, if he had sooner known of the disaster that had befallen Korsakoff, might have gone straight from Altdorf to Glarus, reaching it in time to force his way down the Linth valley. Or if French aeroplanes, commanding the air, had forbidden communication between the two Russian armies, wireless telegraphy would have enabled each commander to exchange communications with the other, and Korsakoff would have been bound to obey whatever orders Suvaroff gave.

Thirdly, how much is lost in war by divided counsels, especially when war is waged by allies with divergent interests and purposes. When the Archduke Charles withdrew his army from co-operation with Korsakoff he practically ruined the allied plan of campaign, for Korsakoff, a second-rate man, unfit to resist the genius and the forces of Massena, was left alone; and the Austrians posted to the east were useless to Suvaroff when directed by neither of the Russian

generals. Here, of course, the want of communication aggravated the difficulty of divided responsibility. The events of the Great War of 1914-18 have given evidence of the misfortunes that arise in war from the absence of a united purpose and a single guiding will among allied belligerents. There was an occasion on which one ally, from political motives, refused the assistance tendered by another. A case arose in which one ally refused to make a political concession which would, if made, have proved of the greatest political as well as military importance. There was another in which the insistence of one ally on a particular expedition involved what is now generally considered to have been a useless expenditure of men and money, and there was another instance in which one ally refused from political reasons to consent to a military operation which would almost certainly have shortened the war by at least a year. As much of the inner history of the war has not yet been disclosed, it is only in the most general terms that these cases can be referred to, but a full statement would make the argument stronger. There is of course a sense in which the multitude of counsellors gives wisdom. Consultation may avert dangers as well as lead to the missing of golden opportunities. But on the whole divided counsels are the parents of weakness and loss. Suvaroff might have effected far more in Italy if the whole

conduct of the war had been left to him. Germany gained between 1914 and 1918 by her dominance over Austria, and Turkey would have been helpless without the control of Germany and the presence of German officers. The successes of Napoleon's career up to 1812, and his energetic resistance during 1813 when he had Russia, Prussia, Austria, and England arrayed against an almost exhausted France, are the most striking evidence of what the concentration of authority in one strenuous will may effect.

IMPRESSIONS OF PALESTINE (1914)

No country has been so often described or so minutely described by travellers of all sorts of tastes and interests as Palestine has been; and this is natural, for none has excited so keen an interest for so long a time and in so many nations.

As we have all at some time or other read much about the country, it may well be thought that nothing now remains to be said about Palestine except by archaeologists, whose explorations of the sites of ancient cities are always bringing fresh facts to light. But if all of us have read a good deal about the Holy Land, most of us have also forgotten a good deal, and our ideas of the country — ideas coloured by sentiments of reverence and romance—are often vague and not always correct.

It may therefore be worth while to set down in a plain and brief way the salient impressions which the country makes on a Western traveller who passes quickly through it. The broad impressions are the things that remain in memory when most of the details have vanished, and broad impressions are just what an elaborate

description sometimes fails to convey, because they are smothered under an infinitude of details.

Palestine is a very small country. Though the traveller's handbooks prepare him to find it small, it surprises him by being smaller than he expected. Taking it as the region between the Mediterranean on the west and the Jordan and Dead Sea on the east, from the spurs of Lebanon and Hermon on the north to the desert at Beersheba on the south, it is only 110 miles long and from 50 to 60 broad.

Of this region large parts did not really belong to ancient Israel. Its hold on the southern and northern districts was but slight, while in the south-west a wide and rich plain along the Mediterranean was occupied by the warlike Philistines, who were sometimes more than a match for the Hebrew armies. Israel had, in fact, little more than the hill country which lay between the Jordan on the east and the maritime plain on the west. King David, in the days of his power, looked down from the hill cities of Benjamin, just north of Jerusalem, upon Philistine enemies only 25 miles off, on the one side, and looked across the Jordan to Moabite enemies about as far off, on the other.

Nearly all the events in the history of Israel that are recorded in the Old Testament happened within a territory whose area is some 4800 square miles; and into hardly any other country has

there been crowded from the days of Abraham till our own so much history—that is to say, so many events that have been recorded and deserve to be recorded in the annals of mankind. To history, however, I shall return later.

Nor is it only that Palestine is really a small country. The traveller constantly feels as he moves about that it is a small country. From the heights a few miles north of Jerusalem he sees, looking northward, a far-off summit carrying snow for eight months in the year. It is Hermon, nearly 10,000 feet high—Hermon, whose fountains feed the rivers of Damascus. But Hermon is outside the territory of Israel altogether, standing in the land of the Syrians. So, too, it is of Lebanon. We are apt to think of that mountain mass as within the country, because it also is frequently mentioned in the Psalms and the Prophets; but the two ranges of Lebanon rise beyond the frontiers of Israel, lying between the Syrians of Damascus and the Phoenicians of the west.

Perhaps it is because the maps from which children used to learn Bible geography were on a large scale that most of us have failed to realise how narrow were the limits within which took place all those great doings that fill the books of Samuel and Kings. Just in the same way the classical scholar who visits Greece is surprised to find that so small a territory sufficed for so many

striking incidents and for the careers of so many famous men.

Palestine is a country poor in any natural resources. There are practically no minerals—no coal, no iron, no copper, no silver, though recently some oil-wells have been discovered in the Jordan valley. Neither are there any large forests, and though the land may have been better wooded in the days of Joshua than it is now, there is little reason to think that the woods were of trees sufficiently large to constitute a source of wealth. A comparatively small area is fit for tillage.

To an Arab tribe that had wandered through a barren wilderness for forty weary years, Canaan may well have seemed a delightful possession; but many a county in Iowa, many a department in France, could raise more grain or wine than all the Holy Land.

There is one stretch of fertile, level land 20 miles long and from 3 to 6 miles wide—the plain of Esdraelon. But with this exception it is only in the bottoms and on the lower slopes of a few valleys, chiefly in the territory of Ephraim from Bethel northward and along the shores of the Bay of Acre, that one sees cornfields and olive-yards and orchards. Little wine is now grown.

Such wealth as the country has consists in its pastures, and the expression "a land flowing with milk and honey" appropriately describes the best it has to offer, for sheep and goats can thrive on

the thin herbage that covers the hills, and the numerous aromatic plants furnish plenty of excellent food for the bees; but it is nearly all thin pasture, for the land is dry and the soil mostly shallow. The sheep and goats vastly outnumber the oxen. Woody Bashan, on the east side of Jordan, is still the region where one must look for strong bulls.

Palestine is not a beautiful country. The classical scholar finds charms everywhere in Greece, a land consecrated to him by the genius of poets and philosophers, although a great part of Greece is painfully dry and bare. So too the traveller who brings a mind suffused by reverence and piety to spots hallowed by religious associations, sees the landscapes of the Holy Land through a golden haze that makes them lovely. But the scenery of the Holy Land, taken as a whole (for there are exceptions presently to be noticed), is inferior, both in form and in colour, to that of northern and middle Italy, to that of Norway and Scotland, to that of the coasts of Asia Minor, to that of many parts of the states of California and Washington in the New World.

The hills are flat-topped ridges, with a monotonous sky-line, very few of them showing any distinctive shape; not a peak anywhere, and Tabor the only summit recognisable by its form. They are all composed of grey or reddish-grey limestone, bare of wood, and often too stony for

tillage. Between the stones or piles of rock there are low shrubs, and in the few weeks of spring masses of brilliant flowers give rich hues to the landscape; but for the rest of the year all is grey or brown. The grass is withered away or is scorched brown, and scarcely any foliage is seen on the tops or upper slopes of the rolling hills. It is only in some of the valleys that one finds villages nestling among olive groves, and orchards where plum and peach and almond blossoms make spring lovely.

Arid indeed is the land. The traveller says with the Psalmist: "My soul longs in a dry, parched land, wherein no water is." Wells are few, springs still fewer, and of brooks there are practically none, for the stony channels at the bottom of the glens have no water except after a winter rainstorm. There may probably have been a more copious rainfall twenty or thirty centuries ago, when more wood clothed the hill-sides, and the country would then have been more pleasing to northern eyes, to which mountains are dear because rills make music and green boughs wave in the wind.

To this general description there are certain exceptions which must not be forgotten. The high ridge of Mount Carmel rises grandly from the sea, and on its land side breaks down in bold declivities and deep glens upon the valley through which the Kishon, an almost perennial stream,

finds its way to the Bay of Acre. Here, upon the slopes of a long ridge on the other side of the Kishon, there is a wildering forest of ancient holm-oaks, all the more beautiful because it is the one considerable stretch of natural wood in the whole country west of Jordan.

On the other side of that river the slopes of the plateau which runs eastward into the desert, the Bashan and Gilead of the Old Testament, have also patches of woodland left, and in the canyons that cut deep through these slopes there is many a picturesque scene where the brooks Jabbok and Yarmuk leap in tiny waterfalls from ledge to ledge of the cliffs. These are the only brooks in all the country, these and the Kishon, which itself is reduced in late summer to a line of pools.

Of the wider views there are two that ought to be noted. One is beautiful. It is the prospect from the top of Mount Tabor, a few miles east of Nazareth, over the wide plain of Esdraelon, specially charming in April, when the green of the upspringing wheat and barley contrasts with the rich red of the strips of newly ploughed land that lie between.

The other is grand and solemn. From the Mount of Olives, and indeed from the higher parts of Jerusalem itself, one looks across the deep hollow where the Jordan, a little below Jericho, pours its turbid waters into the Dead Sea,

and sees beyond this hollow the long steep wall of the mountains of Moab.

These mountains are the edge of the great plateau—3000 feet higher than the Dead Sea—which extends into the great desert of northern Arabia. Among them is conspicuous the projecting ridge of Nebo, or Pisgah, from which Moses looked out upon that Promised Land which he was not permitted to enter. These mountains are the background of every eastward view from the heights of Judea. Always impressive, they become weirdly beautiful toward sunset, when the level light turns their stern grey to exquisite purples and a tender lilac that deepens into violet as the night begins to fall.

In eastern Galilee also there are noble prospects of distant Hermon; nor is there any coast scenery anywhere finer than that of the seaward slopes of Lebanon behind Sidon and Beirut. But Hermon and Lebanon (as already remarked) lie outside Palestine and would need a description to themselves. Damascus, seen from the heights above, its glittering white embosomed in orchards, is a marvel of beauty—a pearl set in emeralds, say the Muslims. Petra, far off in the Arabian desert to the south, is a marvel of wild grandeur, with its deep, dark gorges and towering crags; but these also lie outside Palestine.

Though not comparable in beauty either to the lakes of Britain or to those that lie among the

Alps, or to Lake George in New York and Lake Tahoe in California, the Sea of Galilee has a quiet charm of its own.

The shores are bare of wood and the encircling mountains show no bold peaks; yet the slopes of the hills, sometimes abruptly, sometimes falling in soft and graceful lines, have a pleasing variety, and from several points a glimpse may be caught of the snowy top of Hermon rising beyond the nearer ranges. A great sadness broods over the silent waters. The cities that decked it like a necklace have, all but Tiberias, vanished so utterly that archaeologists dispute over their sites. There is little cultivation; and where half a million of people are said to have lived at the beginning of our era, not 5000 are now to be found. Many a devastating war and the misgovernment of fourteen centuries have done their fatal work.

If Palestine is not a land of natural wealth nor a land of natural beauty, what is it? What are the impressions which the traveller who tries to see it exactly as it is carries away with him? Roughly summed up, they are these: stones, caves, tombs, ruins, battlefields, sites hallowed by traditions—all bathed in an atmosphere of legend and marvel.

Never was there a country, not being an absolute desert, so stony. The hill-sides seem one mass of loose rocks, larger or smaller. The olive-yards and vineyards are full of stones. Even the

cornfields (except in the alluvial soil of the plain of Esdraelon and along the sandy coast) seem to have more pebbles than earth, so that one wonders how crops so good as one sometimes sees can spring up. Caves are everywhere, for limestone is the prevailing rock, and it is the rock in which the percolation of rain makes clefts and hollows and caverns most frequent.

Many of the incidents of Bible history are associated with caverns, from the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, where Abraham buried Sarah and in which he is supposed to have been himself interred, down to the sepulchre hewn in rock in which the body of Christ was laid and over which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built by Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine.

Tradition points out many other sacred caves. It places the annunciation by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin at Nazareth in one cavern, and the birth of Christ at Bethlehem in another, and assigns others to Samson, to David, to Elijah, and to various prophets. All over the country one finds tombs hewn in the solid rocks and pillars, or piles of stone marking a burial-place. Many of these rock tombs may be the work of races that dwelt here before Israel came. In a rocky land, where natural cavities are common, this becomes the obvious mode of interment. Thus here, as in Egypt, one seems to be in a land rather of the dead than of the living.

The impression of melancholy which this brooding shadow of death gives is heightened by the abundance of ruins. From very early times men built here in stone because there were, even then, few large trees, and though the dwellings of the poor were mostly of sun-baked mud and have long since vanished, the ease with which the limestone could be quarried and used for building made those who sought defence surround even small towns with walls whose foundations at least have remained. The larger among the surviving ruins date from Roman or from crusading times. These are still numerous, though Muslim vandalism and the habit of finding in the old erections material for new have left comparatively little of architectural interest.

The best preserved remains are those of the Greco-Roman towns east of the Jordan, and these cities—singularly good specimens of the work of their age—are being rapidly destroyed by the Circassians whom the Turks have placed in that region. Be the ruins great or small, they are so numerous that in the course of a day's ride one is everywhere sure to pass far more of them than the traveller could find in even those parts of Europe that have been longest inhabited, and of many the ancient names are lost.

One is amazed at the energy the Crusaders showed in building castles, not a few of them large and all of them solid strongholds, as well as

churches. But none of the fortresses are perfect, and of the churches only four or five have been spared sufficiently to show their beauty. Several —among these the most beautiful and best preserved—have been turned into mosques. Of these ruins few are cared for except by the archaeologist and the historian.

But there are other memorials of the past that have lived on into the present. In no country are there so many shrines of ancient worship, so many spots held sacred—some sacred to Jews, some to Christians, some to Mussulmans. Neither has any other country so many spots that still draw a multitude of pilgrims—not even Belgium and Lombardy, with their profusion of battle-fields. It is a land of ancient strife and seldom-interrupted slaughter.

Before Israel came, the tribes of Canaan warred with one another, and against those tribes Israel had to fight for its life. Along its western border ran the great line of march from Egypt to northern Syria and Mesopotamia the highway of war trodden by the armies of Assyria and Babylon when they passed south to attack Egypt, and by the armies of Egypt when the great Pharaohs, Rameses, Thothmes, and Necho, led them north against Assyria.

In later days the Seleucid kings of Babylon and Antioch had fight after fight for the possession of the country with the Egyptian Ptolemies.

Then appeared the legions of Rome, first under Pompey, then many a campaign to quell the revolt of the Jews. Still later came those fiercest enemies of Rome, the Sassanid kings of Persia, whose great invasion of A.D. 614 laid waste Jerusalem and spread ruin over the land.

Just after that invasion the Arabs, then in the first flush of their swift conquest, descended on the enfeebled province and set up that Muslim rule which has often changed hands from race to race and dynasty to dynasty, but has never disappeared. When the Mohammedan princes had fought among themselves for four centuries they were suddenly attacked by a host of Crusaders from western Europe, and the soil of Palestine was drenched afresh with blood. The chronicle of more recent wars, including Napoleon's irruption which stopped at Acre in 1799, comes down to the Egyptian invasion in the days of Mehemet Ali.

From the top of Mount Tabor one looks down on six famous battle-fields—the first, that of the victory of Deborah and Barak over Sisera, commemorated in the oldest of Hebrew war-songs (Judges, chapters iv.-v.), and the last, that of the victory of the French over the Turks in 1799. And in this plain, near the spot where Barak overcame Sisera and Pharaoh Necho overcame Josiah, is to be fought the mysterious Armageddon (Revelation, chapter xvi.).

Caves and tombs, ruins and battle-fields, and

ancient seats of worship, are the visible signs of that dominion of the past, over-weighting and almost effacing the present, which one feels constantly and everywhere in Palestine. For us English-speaking men and women, who read the Bible in our youth and have followed the stream of history down through antiquity and the Middle Ages, no country is so steeped in historical associations.

It could not be otherwise, for in no other country (save Egypt) did history begin so early; none has seen such an unending clash of races and creeds; none has been the theatre of so many events touching the minds of so large a part of mankind. The interest which Nature, taken alone, fails to give is given in unequalled profusion by history, and by legend even more than by history.

The Holy Land is steeped also in an atmosphere of legend and marvel. As the traveller steps ashore at Jaffa he is shown the rock to which Andromeda was chained when Perseus rescued her from the sea monster. (It is the only Greek story localised on these shores.) Till recent years he was also shown the remains of the ribs of another sea monster, the "great fish" that swallowed and disgorged the prophet Jonah, whose tomb he will see on the coast near Sidon. When he proceeds toward Jerusalem he passes Lydda, the birthplace of St. George, where that

youthful hero slew the dragon. A little farther comes the spot where another young champion, Samson, the Danite, had in earlier days killed a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass.

Still farther along the railway line he is pointed to the opening of the Valley of Ajalon, where, according to the Book of Joshua, the sun and moon stood still while Israel pursued its enemies. An hour later, as the train approaches Jerusalem, he looks down on the rocky gorge in which St. Sabas, himself a historical character, famous and influential in the sixth century, dwelt in a cave where a friendly lion came to bear him company; and from Jerusalem he can note the spot at which the host of Israel passed dry-shod over Jordan, following the Ark of the Covenant, and near which Elisha made the iron swim and turned bitter waters to sweet. Thence, too, he can descry, far off among the blue hills of Moab, the mountain top to which Balaam was brought to curse Israel, and where "the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet" (Numbers, chapter xxii.; 2 Peter, chapter ii.).

These scenes of marvel, all passing before the eye in a single afternoon, are but a few examples of the beliefs associated with ancient sites over the length and breadth of the country. All sorts of legends have sprung up among Muslims, as well as Jews and Christians, the Muslim legends being indeed the wildest. For nearly every incident

mentioned in the Old or New Testament a local site has been found, often one highly improbable, perhaps plainly impossible, which nevertheless the devout are ready to accept.

The process of site-finding had begun before the days of the Empress Helena, and it goes on still. (Quite recently the Muslims have begun to honour a cave at the base of Mount Carmel, which they hold to have sheltered Elijah.) Nothing is more natural, for the number of pilgrims goes on increasing with the increased ease and cheapness of transportation, and the sites have to be found for the pilgrims.

The Roman Catholics come chiefly from France, but they are few compared with the multitude of Russians, nearly all simple peasants ready to kiss the stones of every spot which they are told that the presence of the Virgin or a saint has hallowed.

To accommodate those pilgrim swarms—for besides the Catholics and the Orthodox, the other ancient churches of the East, such as the Armenians, the Copts, and the Abyssinians, are also represented — countless monasteries and hospices have been erected at and around Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and other sacred spots; and thus the aspect of these places has been so modernised as to make it all the more difficult to realise what they were like in ancient days.

Jews have come in large numbers; they have settled in farm colonies; they have built up almost a new quarter on the north side of old Jerusalem. But even they are not so much in evidence as the Christian pilgrims. The pilgrim is now, especially at the times of festival, the dominant feature of Palestine. It is the only country, save Egypt — perhaps even more than Egypt—to which men flock for the sake of the past; and it is here that the philosophic student can best learn to appreciate the part which tradition and marvel have played in moulding the minds and stimulating the religious fervour of mankind.

Under a better government — a government which should give honest administration, repress brigandage, diffuse education, irrigate the now desolate, because sun-scorched, valley of the lower Jordan by water drawn from the upper course of the river — Palestine might become a prosperous and even populous country and have its place in the civilisation of the present.

The inhabitants, mostly Muslims, are a strong and often handsome race, naturally equal to the races of southern Europe; but as Palestine stands to-day, it is a land of the past, a land of memories — memories of religion, but chiefly of religious war, and always rather of war than of peace. The only work ever done in it for peace was done by the preaching, nineteen centuries

ago, of One whose teaching His followers have never put into practice.

The strife of Israel against the Amorites and of the Crusaders against the Muslims pale to insignificance compared with the conflict between five great nations to-day who bear the Christian name, and some of whom are claiming the Almighty as their special patron and protector.

Of one other kind of impression something remains to be said. Does travel in the Holy Land give a clearer comprehension of the narratives of the Old and New Testaments? Does it give a livelier sense of their reality? This question must be answered separately for the two divisions of the Bible.

On the Old Testament the traveller gets an abundance of fresh light from visiting the spots it mentions. The history of Israel from the time of Joshua—indeed, from the time of Abraham—stands out vividly. One realises the position of the chosen people in the midst of hostile tribes—some tribes close to them: the Philistines at the western part of the Judean hills; the Tyrians almost within sight of Carmel, to the north; Amalek in the desert to the south, raiding as far as Hebron; Moab and the Beni Ammon on the plateau that lies beyond Jordan to the east; while the Syrian kingdom of Ben-hadad and Hazael threatens from behind the ridges of Galilee.

One sees the track along which the hosts of

Egypt and Assyria marched. One feels the breath of the desert upon the prophets, for the desert comes into Palestine itself. One traverses it descending from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. It lies in bare, brown cliffs above the gardens of Jericho. One understands what the foe of Israel meant when he said the gods of Israel were gods of the hills, and his own gods of the valleys.

One sees how near to the Gilboan Mountains was Endor, where Saul went to consult the witch the night before the fatal battle (1 Samuel, chapter xxviii.), and how near also the wall of Bethshan, to which the Philistines fixed his body and that of the gallant Jonathan. Samaria, the stronghold of Omri, and long afterward of Herod, frowns upon the plain beneath, and at Jezreel the slope is seen up which Jehu drove his steeds so furiously to the slaughter of Jezebel (2 Kings, chapter ix.).

One can feel it all to be real. Elijah runs before the chariot of Ahab while the thunder is pealing above, and Naaman is bathing in Jordan on his way back to Damascus from the visit to Elisha. The historical books of the Old Testament are so full of references to localities that one uses them almost as a handbook. Napoleon, they say, had them read aloud to him in the evenings in his camp on the Syrian expedition of 1799.

And though the aspect of things has been

greatly changed since those days by the disappearance of ancient forests, the introduction of some new trees and new kinds of buildings, not to speak of two railways and a few macadamised roads, still the natural features of hill and valley remain, and there is much in the ways and customs of the people that remains the same. The shepherd leads the same life, except that he has no longer to fear the lion, who has long since vanished, nor the bear, who survives only in the recesses of the northern hills.

When one turns to the New Testament, how great is the difference. Except as regards Jerusalem and the Sea of Galilee, there are scarcely any references to localities in the Gospel narratives, and in those few references little or nothing turns upon the features of the place.

We can identify some of the spots where miracles are related, such as Nain and Cana of Galilee, but the events are not connected with any special feature of the locality. Journeys are mentioned, but not the route along which Christ passed, except Sychar, in the Samaritan territory, where was Jacob's well, one of the few sacred spots which can be positively identified. (The Crusaders erected a church over it which is now being restored by Franciscan monks.) The cities round the Sea of Galilee have, all except Tiberias, vanished from the earth, and the sites of most of them are doubtful.

The town now called Nazareth has been accepted for many centuries as the home of Christ's parents, but the evidence to prove it so is by no means clear, and it is hard to identify the cliff on which the city was built. The Mount of Olives, in particular, and the height on its slope, where Christ, following the path from Bethany, looked down on Jerusalem, and the temple in all its beauty, are the spots at which one seems to get into the closest touch with the Gospel narrative; and it is just here that the scene has been most changed by new buildings, high walls, villas and convents and chapels. Even the scenic conditions, and whatever we may call "the setting" of the parables, belong rather to the Eastern world than to Palestine. You do not feel the incidents to be the more real because they are placed in this particular part of the East.

All this makes the traveller realise afresh and from a new side that while the Old Testament is about and for Israel, as well as composed in the land of Israel, the Gospel, though the narrative is placed in the land, and the preaching was delivered to the people, of Israel, is addressed to the world.

The Old Testament books, or at least the legal and historical books, are concerned with one people, with the words and deeds of its kings and prophets and warriors, whereas the New

Testament is concerned with the inner life of all mankind. The one is of the concrete, the other of the abstract; the one of the actual, the other of the ideal. The actual is rooted in time and place; the ideal is independent of both. It is only in parts of the poetical and prophetic books that the teaching becomes ideal and universal, like that of the New Testament.

It ought perhaps to be added that the incidents of Chronicles in the Old Testament belong (except, of course, when the element of marvel comes in) to what may be called normal history, and can therefore be realised just as easily as we realise the wars of the Crusaders and the deeds of Sultan Saladin.

We picture to ourselves the battle of Saul and the Philistines at Gilboa as we picture the battle of Napoleon against the Turks, a few miles farther north. It is much harder to fit the Gospel with the framework of Jerusalem or Galilee, because its contents are unlike anything else in history. An Indian Mussulman scholar or a thoughtful Buddhist from Japan might not feel this, but it is hard for a European or American Christian not to feel it.

Whether these explanations be true or not, it is the fact that to some travellers the sight of the places that are mentioned in the Gospel seems to bring no further comprehension of its meaning, no heightened emotion, except that which the

thought that they are looking upon the very hills, perhaps treading the very paths that were trodden by the feet of Christ and the Apostles, naturally arouses. The narrative remains to them in just the same ideal, non-local atmosphere which surrounded it in their childhood. It still belongs to the realm of the abstract, to the world of the soul rather than to the world of physical nature. It is robed not in the noonday glare of Palestine, as they see it to-day, nor even in the rich purple which her sunsets shed upon the far-off hills, but in a celestial light that never was on sea or land.

These travellers, however—mostly Protestants—are the few exceptions. The typical pilgrim, be he or she a Roman Catholic Legitimist from France or an unlettered peasant from Russia, accepts everything and is edified by everything. The Virgin and the saints have always been so real to these devout persons, the sense of their reality heightened by constant prayers before the Catholic image or the Russian ikon, that it is natural for the pilgrim to think of them as dwelling in the very spots which the guide points out, and the marvellous parts of the legends present to them no difficulty.

The French Catholic has probably been on a pilgrimage to Lourdes and drawn health from the holy spring in its sacred cavern. The Russian peasant has near his home some wonder-working picture. The world to him is still full of religious

miracles, and Palestine is but the land in which the figures who consecrate the spots are the most sacred of all those whom Christianity knows. To him to die in it is happiness, for death is the portal to Heaven. Nowhere else does one see a faith so touching in its simplicity.

To all travellers who have anything of poetry in their hearts, be they pilgrims or tourists, or critical archaeologists and historians, there is, and there will always be, an inexpressible romance in this journey. Palestine is pre-eminently the Land of the Past—a land whose very air is charged with the human emotions and the memories of human action, reaching far back into the dim twilight of prehistoric centuries.

No one who is in any degree susceptible to the impressions of nature or of history can help feeling the glamour of the country. The colours of distant hills, seen at morn or even through this clear, keen air, seem rich and sad with the pathos of ages of human effort and human passion. The imagination is always trying to body forth the men and women who lived beneath these skies, the heroes of war and the saints of suffering, the nameless poets, and the prophets who live on in their burning words, and to give them visible form and life.

Imagination always fails, but it never desists from the attempt, and though it cannot visualise the scenes, it feels the constant presence of these

shadowy figures. In them, shadowy as they are, in the twilight of far-off ages, the primal forces of humanity were embodied—in them its passionate aspirations seem to have their earliest, simplest, and most moving expression.

THE ISLES OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC (1912)

Though I had in 1883 visited the Hawaiian Islands, it was not till 1912 that the opportunity came of seeing the other Pacific Isles which lie far off to the south half-way between Australia and South America. The several archipelagoes of which they consist are each of them less compact than is the Hawaiian group, for every island in that group is visible from some other, so the inhabitants now form practically a single people, and are all in much the same social and economic condition. Another difference is that although most of the southern islands are separated from one another by fairly wide spaces of sea, no group is so entirely isolated as is the Hawaiian. These southern Polynesian Isles have been in frequent communication with one another both in peace and in war, their large canoes, some of which carry as many as a hundred persons, venturing across hundreds of miles of open ocean and rarely missing their way. The islands vary greatly in size and in aspect, but all are, in one way or another, the product of two forces, volcanic fires

acting irregularly but often with tremendous force, and the unremitting labour, conducted through countless centuries, of the coral animals. A short, general description may precede what I have to say of the islands I myself visited. Three classes may be roughly distinguished.

Whoever approaches Tahiti from the north passes between a crowd of coral islets, each of which is a ring or sometimes a sort of horseshoe of grass and low shrubs scarcely rising above high-water mark, and enclosing a smooth lagoon. Some are tiny, some a mile or more in circumference. Some have a surface only a few yards wide, others are broader and higher, with soil enough to support rows of cocoanut palms. Islands of this type are called Atolls—a word drawn from the name they bear in the Maldive Archipelago—and their shape has usually been explained by supposing them to have been built up along the edges of a submarine volcanic crater, the rest of which is filled by the lagoon. In all volcanic regions processes of elevation and subsidence are frequent, so that the rim of a crater now not much below the sea surface may at one time have stood high out of the sea, and when it sank became the foundation on which the coral insect set to work to build the reef. Most of these atolls are uninhabited, but those large enough to have plenty of cocoa-nuts and perhaps other fruit-bearing trees, can support a certain

population, who live off the fruit and the crustaceans they find on the reef, and the fish they catch in the lagoon; and by collecting the mother-of-pearl shells and selling the cocoa-nuts for copra to any trading ship that comes their way. Strange and picturesque are these little specks in the vast ocean, the green circle of their surface perhaps only a few yards wide (for the reefs vary in width) set between the flashing line of spray where the waves smite the rocks, and the still light green waters of the lagoon within. One thinks of the plight of a sailor shipwrecked or marooned on such a spot, where there is not even a tree for him to climb whence he could descry a passing ship—and years might pass before such a ship came,—with a life far more dismal than that of Alexander Selkirk on Juan Fernandez, for his kingdom was a pretty large and mountainous isle, bearing great woods. One thinks also of the perils through which the early explorers had to thread their way in seas still uncharted, when even the plummet might often give no warning of how to find a safe channel through the labyrinth of reefs.

A second class of isles are those whose surface is mainly or wholly composed of coralline limestone, sometimes resting on a foundation of volcanic rock, or of consolidated ashes and cinders. Such isles have been built up on rock platforms, but at no great depth. They are in fact broad

reefs, slowly formed, and gradually raised well above the sea by subterranean forces. Usually level or slightly undulating, they sometimes rise into low ridges, but their lines are tame and their beauty depends chiefly on their vegetation. Two such islands, which I mention because I landed on them, are Mangaia and Aitutaki, both British, in the Cook group. The former is all of coral, with a hill rising about one hundred feet above the sea, and containing caverns, its aspect much like that of the smaller islands of the Bahamas—pretty and pleasing with its banana and orange groves, but a decidedly dull place to spend one's life in. Somewhat similar is Aitutaki, in the same group, but here the soil is largely composed of volcanic matter, with coral limestone in some places superimposed, and therefore more fertile, so there is more trade and a larger population, and a certain sense of movement and variety. It was not always so peaceful as it looks now, for in the old heathen days a raiding fleet of canoes once destroyed or expelled a large part of the inhabitants.

The third set of isles are those which are palpably of volcanic origin and aspect, though only a few, chiefly in the Tonga group to the W.N.W. of Tahiti, contain any still active volcanoes, none of them comparable in size and energy to those of Hawaii or those of Java. It is in these isles that the traveller finds most of grandeur, most of beauty, most of human interest

also, for the size of some, and the richness of the soil in all, has given them comparatively larger populations and a more interesting history. Varying in size and aspect, they are usually alike in having a mountainous interior, a level plain sometimes quite narrow, sometimes several miles in width, between the mountains and the sea, and an encircling coral reef, a feature of the South Seas which is so often referred to by all travellers and novelists and missionaries as if it was a thing which everybody else understood (though very few do) that it needs a little explanation. It is not the sort of sharp crest of rock which Englishmen and Americans see standing up out of the sea on the coasts of Devon or Cornwall or Massachusetts. It is an almost level platform of coralline, *i.e.* limestone rock, usually from six to eight or ten feet wide, and rising very little above the surface of the sea at high water. You can walk along it at low water, though there are shallow pools on the top, often rough with shells, often slippery with seaweeds and small molluscs. On the outside it slopes steeply into deep water. On the inside it subsides more gently into the enclosed lagoon which usually separates it from the shore. Sometimes the lagoon is shallow, varying from two or three feet to a couple of fathoms, seldom exceeding four hundred yards in width. Sometimes there is no lagoon, *i.e.* the reef forms the sea line of the coast. The water

inside the reef being shallow is of a lovely green, and so clear that as a boat glides over it one can see and name the creatures crawling about, while the fish play hide and seek among the sponges and seaweeds and round the lumps of coral that stand up from the bottom. The reef is the most distinctive feature of tropical islands, and affects their life in many ways. It keeps out the sharks, which, prowling incessantly about, fear to enter the lagoon through the openings, because they would be stranded in the shallow water. Hence it gives ample facilities for safe bathing, qualified only by the presence at the bottom of an odious little fish called the "sting-ray," the spines of whose back pierce the feet of whosoever happens to tread upon them, and produces wounds worse than those which the spines of the sea-urchins inflict on the unwary bather on the shores of Portugal. The reef, however, keeps out not only the sharks but the ships, which can touch the mainland only where there happens to be a break in it, such as is sometimes to be found opposite a place at which a stream enters the sea, for the coral insect thrives only in salt water. When such a break is ten yards or more in breadth, and the water inside up to some point on the beach is two or three fathoms deep, you get a good harbour, for the natural coral breakwater compels the ocean swell to enter on a windward shore and spend its force on the reef, leaving the lagoon

perfectly still, though of course the force of the wind remains, so that in a hurricane the only chance for a vessel is to steam out if she can and get away from a lee shore. The coast scenery, too, owes to the reef one of its greatest charms, for the surf breaking on it sends up all along the shores a line of sparkling spray between the deep blue of the ocean without and the bright green of the lagoon within.

The centre of these volcanic isles is always mountainous, and occasionally, when there have been cones and craters of eruption at different points, there are distinct mountain peaks leaving wide valleys between; but as a rule it is the flat region along the sea that is cultivated, and here that the bulk of the people live. The heights are of no use, except for timber, and as little firewood is needed, and as few of the forest trees have market value, and there is no pasture for cattle on the hill-sides, the mountains are of no use except to draw the rain-bearing clouds, and to be admired by white visitors who care about scenery. Travellers for pleasure are extremely few. I heard of scarcely any as having recently landed anywhere in the Society or Cook group. The lack of accommodation for tourists is sufficient evidence of their absence. Among the most beautiful of those I saw are Raiatea (French) and Rarotonga (British). The latter is a little gem, about twenty-five miles in circumference, its

fringing plain running up wide valleys to a bold group of peaks in the centre, every bay and promontory with its own peculiar charm. But perhaps the most striking is the still tinier isle of Tutuila, the only one which belongs to the United States, which in the partitionment of Varnow between three Powers, who fancied themselves to have claims on the Samoan group, chose this, though the smallest of the group, because it had by far the best harbour. This harbour, called Pago Pago, is an inlet easily accessible, having no reef at its mouth, and the water extremely deep, and it is also excellently sheltered by a projecting point, which keeps the bay behind it smooth. One guesses this bay to be the remains of a large broken crater, for the mountains which enclose the bay and the narrow valley stretching backwards from it, rise abruptly from the shore, so abruptly that one wonders how so thick a forest can cling to their precipitous sides, a forest with every hue of green, from which red and black spires of rock stand out. Those who think they honour Nature by comparing her to art would say that this landscape is like the drop-scene of an opera, for if it were not real it might seem impossible that a sea so blue should run into deep cavernous hollows, and that such unscalable pinnacles should be covered with such foliage. Fortunate is the American commandant who has Pago Pago for his post, if he is of studious habits,

or if he loves Nature so well as to be content with no society but that of his own small staff, for there were no other white people on this tiny speck in the ocean. There was at the time of which I write no road to walk or drive upon, except for a few miles up the valley, and nowhere to go to if there were a road, nothing to do except bathe in the sparkling sea and lie on the veranda on a long deck chair, falling off into a sweet slumber—sleep is delicious in the warm trade wind—and wish that the monthly steamer may bring some friend or perhaps even some enemy.

The Tutuila aborigines are primitive in their ways, for civilisation has found little to spoil in her, the harbour has no hinterland, and hardly anything worth exporting is produced. We were given a display of native dancing singularly graceful, and the patriarchal chief entertained us in a white house, open on all sides to the breeze, with a feast of Kaba, the native dish, made from the Taro root, a sort of arum which is the prime delicacy of the Polynesians, and the eating of which was a prime feature in the great festivals of the days before the white man came. It is a sort of sweetish paste or porridge, requiring long and careful preparation, to us, not indeed, attractive, but very palatable, so that one can partake of it with the effusive recognition which the circumstances prescribe.

The varieties in aspect which these islands

present are paralleled by the varieties in the character of their inhabitants, but just as there is a fundamental difference between the two types of island, the high volcanic isles and the low coralline isles, so among the inhabitants there are two clearly distinguished stocks, the Melanesian and the Polynesian. I have not visited the isles inhabited by the former, which lie west, a little south and north of the Equator, including the Fijian group and New Britain, and the Solomon Isles. Those people are dark, approaching black, with frizzled hair, and with a mouth and jaw that have something of a negroid quality. They approximate to the Papuans of New Guinea, who are themselves related to the Australian aborigines. Very different are the Polynesians, who occupy the islands more to the south and east, extending as far as from Hawaii, north of the Equator, to New Zealand in the far south-west. In some islands, such as the Tonga Archipelago, there are traces of admixture, but on the whole the Polynesians are a singularly marked stock, true to type over the seven thousand miles from Hawaii to New Zealand, and speaking different dialects of what is substantially the same language, a fact which seems to indicate that their dispersal from their original home is comparatively recent, *i.e.* to be reckoned by hundreds rather than by thousands of years. They are as a rule strong and well made, rather taller than the inhabitants

of Southern Europe, not as tall as the Teutons of Northern Europe. Their colour, a lightish brown verging on olive, the hair long, straight and black, the eyes dark, the features generally well chiselled and sometimes, especially among the women, very handsome. The New Zealand natives are rather shorter in stature than the Hawaiians or Tahitians, and the features not so fine. Whether this has anything to do with climatic conditions I will not venture to say. Ethnologists are now pretty well agreed that the Polynesians have come from Eastern Asia, a source faintly indicated by their traditions, but they are quite different in colour and aspect from the Malays, and still more unlike either the Japanese or Chinese, or Siamese type. They are entirely unlike any American aborigines I have seen either in North, Central, or South America, and though some of the Pacific Isles lie nearer to America than to the mainland of Asia, and the prevalent winds blow from the former, there are no traces of any migrations from America. It is worth remarking that the tribes on the Pacific side of America had, when the Spaniards first saw them, no turn for sea-faring, and do not seem to have ever embarked on long voyages, neither have they traditions of such voyages, whereas the Caribs, on the other side of the American Continent, were bold and active mariners, carrying on both trade and piracy

all the way from Guiana to the coasts of Northern Mexico, through the Antilles.

Polynesians are excellent seamen. They can find their way by the stars over hundreds of miles of open sea in their canoes, which are sometimes double, with a platform between the two, on which they erect a sort of hut, and outriggers of a light wood selected for the purpose. The big war canoes could carry fighting crews up to a hundred. The traveller who to-day lands from a steamer rolling in the swell outside the reef, admires the dexterity with which the natives guide their small canoes, loaded to the gunwale and piled high above it with boxes of goods, on the crest of breaking waves through the narrow opening in the reef on to the beach within. It is one of the delights which voyaging gives comparable to that of shooting the rapids in a small boat on some strong river, rushing down a rocky channel, like the Tarn in Southern France, or the Douro in Portugal, or the great mountain streams of Japan.

A passing traveller has little opportunity for studying the large and fascinating subject of the languages, mythology, poetry, and customs of these Pacific islanders. Much has been written about them, and much more ought to be written before the last traces of the old beliefs and usages have passed away, as they are now quickly vanishing from Polynesia, though most of the Melanesian Isles are far more primitive, many of them scarcely

touched by Christianity, the great solvent. Into this immense field I must not venture. But it is noteworthy that the outstanding virtues always were courage, hospitality, and politeness. Courage was deeply rooted in tribal solidarity, which made the whole tribe fight to the death, and, doubtless, often led to the extinction of the weaker. Morality had nothing to do with religion, *i.e.* with the worship of deities or ancestral spirits. They were not moral beings, nor disposed to reward virtue or punish crime. But they had two points of contact with social life. A tribe would, in a moment of deadly peril, devote itself as a whole to a god, especially its own god, in the hope that he would interfere to save them. A god might be invoked as a witness. In Samoa, where a solemn declaration equivalent to an oath was to be made, it would sometimes be made on an emblem or object, an emblem connected with the worship of a deity, the parties invoking destruction at his hands if their statement was false. This reminds one of the swearing on the Temple Ring in Ireland, and of the oath scene in the *Iliad*, and of oaths taken on the relics of Saints, as by Harold at the Court of William the Norman.[1]

Cannibalism, common among the Melanesians who constantly devoured prisoners, was rare in the Polynesian Isles, and was in some of them

[1] Dr. Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, p. 269.

regarded with horror, though occasionally the heart or liver of a dead enemy might be eaten, either in triumph or to acquire his most manly qualities. The subject is now avoided in refined circles, and in Samoa if a chief of old time is remembered for it, he is delicately referred to as a man of stern character. War captives were sometimes kept as slaves, especially by chiefs, but there was no regular servile class, and a slave was practically as well off as a freeman. An interesting feature of native life, at first sight surprising, explains itself when one reflects on the conditions of a society in which, as writing is either unknown or very scantily used, not only statements of fact but comments on character pass from mouth to mouth. The best way of giving currency to such things is to put them into a form easily remembered. Such is best done by metre or rhyme, or whatever thing approaching metre or rhyme a native language possesses. Whoever wishes to transmit a story or a statement will choose this method. He will compose a song, or an epigrammatic phrase with enough of rhyme or metre to help it to be easily remembered and repeated. It flies on the wings of the wind, goes far, cannot be refuted, because the refutation may not have like wings. It is a tremendous engine of ridicule. The Samoans were so sensitive to such methods of attack that an offensive allusion made in a song might expose

the man who composed it to a heavy fine, or worse. This was the case also in early Rome; it exposed the poet to imprisonment for what seems to us a harmless sarcasm, and nearly cost the famous Icelandic poet and warrior, Egil, son of Skalla-Grim, his life at the hands of Erik Blood Axe then ruling at York. But the analogies between the primitive times of ancient and mediaeval Europe and those of Pacific islanders, where society was still primitive a century ago, would lead one far. There is nothing human but casts some light upon other things human in other days and places.

This primitive Polynesian society has now passed away, not merely under British, German, and French administration, but by the extinction of the customs, which were interwoven with superstition, and especially with the tabu of the old virtues. Courage is no longer needed for war, and never was needed against wild beasts, for the only formidable creature was the shark, and against him courage would have been folly—the only thing to be done was to give him a wide berth. Hospitality declined when the simple communism of the tribe, which scarcely recognised *meum* and *teum*, disappeared. Politeness alone remains, and is still the charm which every visitor feels. How far it is due to what is called the "softness" of the race, the predominance of emotion over reason, how far to the aristocratic

structure of society which obliged the chiefs to maintain a high standard of courtesy in their dealings with one another, is a further question. But there the fact is, a pleasant fact which covers a multitude of sins.

To-day the chiefs have in many isles disappeared, and there is little distinction, except such—it is slight—as differences in property create. The three classes of society are natives and two kinds of whites, missionaries and traders, both small in number, for the pastors are nearly all natives, and there is not enough business to occupy more than a handful of Europeans. As everywhere happens, some slight antagonism has existed between these classes, the missionaries suspecting the traders of taking advantage of the natives, while European administrators try to hold the balance evenly between them. While idolatry still holds its ground in most of the Melanesian isles, except in Fiji, it has almost disappeared among the Polynesians, though men still address their prayers, accompanied by magic rites, for small favours to the old deities, thinking it scarcely respectful to the great God of Christianity to trouble Him with trivialities.[1] In most isles, especially those held by France, there are some Roman Catholics, but the large majority everywhere belong to one or other of

[1] This was what a mission Catechist told a friend of mine of one of the smaller isles.

the English or American religious bodies, by whom missions were sent out—Congregationalists, Wesleyans, and Seventh Day Adventists. The agreeable picture of the missionaries which R. L. Stevenson presents in his South Sea stories is, so far as the hasty traveller can gather, a pretty true picture. They have done a great deal both for the education and the health of the natives.

A change is now passing over the isles greater than any they have seen since, seventy or eighty years ago, European diseases and European liquors began to work havoc among them. Before that time the population in each was comparatively stable, affected only by occasional wars in which the men of one of the larger islands sent a fleet of canoes to plunder or conquer another. The only difference that the intrusion of a few white men made was seen in the growth of a small mixed breed. The traders often took native women to wife, and they made good wives. Then scallawags, whom civilisation spews out of its mouth and who are called beach-combers, would appear; and worse still was the result when deserters from ships or from criminal justice arrived, sometimes rascals who had perhaps mutinied and killed their captain. The mixed race which sprang from these unions, which had usually the vices of both stocks and the virtues of neither, was fortunately small and was soon absorbed into the mass of aborigines. But within recent years, as communications became

more frequent and cheaper, the constant outflow from over-populated China has brought in a number of Chinese, large in proportion to the greatly reduced native population. Rigidly excluded from California, Australia, and New Zealand, and now beginning to be excluded from the isles which Australia and New Zealand control, these immigrants settle in the other Polynesian islands, for they wisely avoid the more savage, and especially the cannibal Melanesian group. They intermarry with the native women, who are glad to have them, for they make good husbands, hard-working and kindly, carrying with them the domestic habits of their homeland. Thus there is growing up, in the Society Islands and the Marquesas, a new mixed race, in which the characteristics of the paternal side are likely to predominate. It may, within half a century, have practically replaced the Polynesian stock. It will be less handsome and less amiable, probably less imaginative and music-loving, but, *per contra*, healthier, more industrious, and apter for trade. Already the small store-keeping and gardening business have, in Tahiti for instance, passed to the Celestials. Something similar may happen in Fiji if the Indian coolies, who have been brought there in large numbers to work the sugar plantations, are not carried back after the terms of their indentures have expired. Their labour is so much more efficient than that of the Mela-

nesian natives that their importation may continue, and if it does, race admixture is likely to follow. In all these cases scientific students of anthorpology will find materials for studying the process by which racial stocks are changed, a process by which all the European races have been made what they are now, though its earlier stages are lost in prehistoric darkness. Here is another of the many problems which fascinate the traveller in the Pacific.

About Tahiti in particular something must now be said, because it is the largest and, with one exception, the most beautiful of all the Southern Pacific Isles. It has something more of a history than any of the others, and a history which at one moment came near to affecting the relations of the Great Powers of Europe.

Tahiti, like Hawaii, was divided among chieftains, members of a sort of noblesse called Haii, who were frequently at war with one another. It had no king, though the head chief of one great clan, the Tavas, held a predominance, owing partly to its exalted and semi-divine lineage, partly to its family connections. For the great chieftains intermarried and set immense store by their relations. They came of an ancient stock. As Rolf Ganger, the Norseman, from whom sprang the Dukes of Normandy, and William, the Conqueror of England, was descended from a bear, so the Tava chieftains claimed descent from a

shark-god. Far back in the ages of tradition a shark swam to the shore through an opening in the reef, assumed, on landing, a human form, became the husband of a Tahitian woman, and after some years tired of her, and swam away as a shark. The quasi-divine offspring of this marriage were the heads of the Tava clan, and I saw the last of them in Tahiti in 1912. His father was European, but the headship had descended to his mother. About the time when Captain Cook came, the usual civil wars were raging in the island, and in the course of troubles that followed a chief who had taken the name of Pomaré, not a Tava but one of lower origin, rose to prominence, and in the course of his wars extended his patronage to the first English missionaries. Religious feeling did not move him, but the hope of obtaining by their aid from English ships fire-arms to use against his rivals. The missionaries did not think well of their protector, who did not profess Christianity till long afterwards, was not morally influenced by it, and had very little of that sort of chivalry which here, as in New Zealand, did something to redeem the ferocity of Polynesian warfare. However, he managed to profit by assuming the headship of the converts, for a religious war broke out between them and the heathen, and after many vicissitudes, Pomaré vanquished his enemies in a decisive battle (1815) and became master of the whole

island. Thenceforth, the missionaries inevitably became the advisers of Pomaré's successors, the extinction of the old worship followed rapidly of itself, for it was seen that the old deities had failed their devotees, and the power of the chiefs also waned with the loss of the superstitious reverence they had commanded. There was a quiet time, little or no tribal raiding, and no human sacrifices, and much less infanticide. But troubles of a new kind arose when, in 1836, two French Roman Catholic missionaries arrived, proposing to convert, not the heathen, for no one professed idolatry, but the congregational Christians, Calvinised under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. When the then reigning Queen Pomaré, apparently at the instance of the British Consul, ordered the priests to quit the island, they appealed to France. The Government of Louis Philippe sent a frigate, whose commander forced Pomaré to submit, to receive back the priests, and to accept a French Protectorate. A long controversy followed. The British Government, though it declined the Protectorate which the queen offered to Great Britain, complained of the high-handed action of the French admiral, who had expelled the British Consul on the charge that he had encouraged the natives to resist French authority. Those whose memory goes back to 1846 can remember the irritation that arose in English religious circles interested in missionary

work, over the wrongs of Queen Pomaré and the arrogant behaviour of the French admiral. Coming at the time when a strong anti-French feeling had grown up over the affair of the Spanish marriages, it seemed to threaten a breach between England and France, and had not quite subsided when the Paris Revolution of 1848, which suddenly overthrew Louis Philippe and Guizot, his Prime Minister, turned English eyes from an island in the South Seas to the European continent, where in Germany, Austria, and Italy, many thrones were tottering. Despairing of British help, Pomaré gave way, the chiefs having already, under French pressure, asked for a French Protectorate. Many of the natives, whether under missionary influence, or because unwilling to be ruled by strangers, made some opposition. But the French arms were irresistible. In 1880 Tahiti was formally annexed to France, and now bears a part in returning a member to the Council of the Colonies at Paris.

Since 1847 peace has reigned in Tahiti; it is the quietest place in the world. But its peace is now, as Tacitus makes Boadicea say of the peace which the Romans established wherever they conquered, a peace of solitude. Captain Cook estimated the native population at 200,000 persons. In 1911 it was 6389, besides 1102, mainly strangers, in the commune of Papeete, the only town. This decrease is not the fault of French

government, but the result of contact with Europeans, the epidemics, and other diseases European ships have brought proving far deadlier than war and infanticide had been in the old days. The swarming population was one of the features of the island which most impressed the first travellers, who described it as a paradise of innocence, happiness, and simplicity, everybody dwelling under his own cocoa-nut palm and living off it, and the yams and taros which his patch of ground gladly yielded. *Fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus.*

All were friendly, and these islanders found easy delights in feasts and dances and song, surf-riding, and bathing daily in the cool streams that descend from the mountains. The voices were so sweet that speech seemed a kind of song, and the chieftainesses, shapely and handsome, received equal honours with the men. Captain Wallis, the discoverer of 1767, was so fascinated by the gracious manners and winning ways of the lady whom he called the Queen—she was the mother of the head chief of the Tavas, for there was in those days neither king nor queen in Tahiti—that he wept on parting from her, and confesses that he wept—an incident rare, perhaps unprecedented, in the annals of the British navy. Commerson, a French naturalist, who accompanied the famous navigator Bougainville on his visit to the island in 1768, indignantly repels the charge of thievish

propensities brought against the natives by showing that where there is no property there can be no theft. His words are so much in the French spirit of that time as to deserve quotation: growing still more enthusiastic over that feature of the native life which had led Bougainville to give to Tahiti the name "Nouvelle Cythérée," he dwells on "la simplicité de leurs mœurs, l'honnêteté de leurs procédés, surtout envers leurs femmes qui ne sont nullement subjugées chez eux comme chez les sauvages, leur philadelphie entre eux tous, leur horreur pour l'effusion du sang humain, leur respect idolâtre pour leurs morts, qu'ils ne regardent que comme des gens endormis, leur hospitalité."

Such a picture of Polynesian society life would have shocked as well as startled the first missionaries of the London Society, who dwell on the incessant wars, and were horrified at the sexual licence which was universal. Wars were as frequent and as fierce here as in the Eastern world before it was conquered by Rome, and were accompanied by human sacrifices, increasing, as at Carthage, on the eve of a great battle. They were not so often from disputes about territory as from quarrels about women, or insults offered by one chief to another. Most of the other passions which afflict mankind are attributed to the remains in him of a primitive brute, but the propensity to fight seems to be rare among the apes, and has developed in man as he had less

occasion to fight against the wild beasts of the forest. Is the propensity incurable? And if so, will it destroy civilisation? From this pre-Christian Tahiti only two relics of the past survive: the ruins of the temples and some few legends preserved in verse, if that name can be given to these unmetrical chants.

The poetry is of the simplest kind, not often of love, sometimes of battle, but most often a lament over the fallen; often with images drawn straight from nature, and with a delight in repeating the names of places associated with the event commemorated. Here are a few lines spoken by the exile Aromaiterai, who lived in the beginning of the eighteenth century, when he looked from afar at the hills above his home:

From Mataoae I look toward my land Tetianina,
The mount Tearatapu, the valley Temaite,
My line of trees on Mowhavatii the high mountain,
Mist hides the mountain—Myclvah cactendi is spread.
Oh that the rain clear away that I may see the high mountain.
Aue! alas! the wall of Mapulii, dear land of mine.

Not unlike these Tahitian verses are those of the Hundred Maoris of New Zealand. Here is a spearman:

It is well with thee, O Moon! You return from death
Spreading your light on the little waves. Men say,
"Behold the Moon reappears."
But the dead of this world return no more.
Grief and pain spring up in my heart as from a fountain.
I hasten to death for relief.

Oh that I might eat those numerous soothsayers
Who could not foretell his death.

Of the rites performed at these Marues (temples) nothing is now remembered by the natives, and little has been preserved by the missionaries. We hear of a supreme deity called Oro, but there is little or nothing about the gods in the poetry, although the cosmology which traces the growth and development of all things from the primeval void is imaginative and bears a curious resemblance to the oldest myths of Greece. One thing seems pretty clear. Polynesian religion had nothing whatever to do with morality, not even with such a rudimentary ethics as we find in the Homeric poems, where the gods punish perjury, and protect the stranger and the suppliant, where sin is followed by retribution. Such morality as the aborigines have to-day is entirely Christian, and their practice pretty much on the level of the uneducated Christian peasant, say in Portugal or Russia. They are quiet and kindly, volatile, uncertain children in their merits and their faults, not idler than we should all be in such a climate where clothes and lodging are almost superfluities. Papeete, the only town (for it has the only harbour), is a straggling village of 4000 people, more than half of them French, about one thousand aborigines, four hundred English and Americans, and four hundred Chinese. It contains over a third of the whole population of the island. Lying

embowered in deep groves and surrounded by gardens and patches of cultivated ground, it is a quiet little place, showing some animation only when a steamer touches, an event which brings to the wharf a multitude of natives, scurrying about like so many ants. The earlier voyagers do not mention Papeete for they put in at the inlet of Mahavai, some miles to the E.N.E. under a spit of land to which Captain Cook gave the name of Point Venus, because it was here that the astronomers who accompanied him observed in 1769 the transit of Venus over the sun's disc. It is an open and level spot, well suited for observations, because it projects into the sea, and lies well away from the cloud-gathering and shower-scattering mountains. On the coralline rock half-covered by low brushwood stands a pillar about sixty feet high, with an inscription in English which commemorates this observation of the Transit, the first occasion on which a scientific expedition had gone so far afield from Europe. Except for the monument which the French have erected at the spot where their last victory over the aborigines was gained, it is the only visible record of the doings of Europeans in Tahiti, as the ruined Marues are the sole memorials of the island in prehistoric days. Though the English were not pleased to see Tahiti go to France eighty years ago, and the British mind can never quite rid itself of the feeling that islands

ought naturally to go to the nation which has done most exploring, and has maintained the largest navy, still the English visitor may find a sort of satisfaction that neither he nor his even more innovative American kindred hold Tahiti now. They would have insisted on improving away its sweet simplicity. The French Government have wisely left it alone. Good roads have been made. Taxation is low, the island pays its way. The prospects of trade in so small a cultivatable area do not suffice to draw prospectors or make it worth the while of the administration to spend money on development. Copra and vanilla and the export of mother-of-pearl shells brought hither from the small isles to the north, supply sufficient exports to pay for such imports as the scanty population needs. The condition if not idyllic in the way Commerson fancied, has a restful ease very attractive to whoever, coming from an America or a Europe where too many things happen, feels he has had more than enough of the stress and strain of civilisation. Here more than anywhere else in the world might he wish to spend his declining days and say with the Roman poet

> who has had enough of work, enough of society, enough of vain efforts to solve the riddle of the painful earth, and seeks only repose and reveries that wander through the hot and dusty ways of the past.

Nothing ever happens, except the arrival or departure of a steamer. Even the tides do not

change, for high tide always comes at midday, and at midnight, and the difference of height is only some inches. The climate is delightful, soft and equable, ranging from 69° to 84°, never cold and never very hot. It is an air to sleep in for ten hours, and to bask in during the other fourteen. Yet if I were settling here it would be above the village in a house on a hill round which the breeze would be always fresh and the prospect over the ocean to the peaks of Murea wide as that from the Giant's Causeway or the peaks of Jura. The scenery is as enchanting as the climate. Tahiti—the natives call it Tahiti nai i nia—is a mass of volcanic mountains surrounded by a level margin from one to two miles wide. The plain is of coral, in fact an old reef which has been raised by subterranean forces. Here are the fields and gardens and villages. The vanilla—a climbing orchidaceous plant—scents the woods, and the shore is bordered by limes and fringed by a reef on which grow cocoa-nut palms. The rest of the island, that is the mountain kernel, is a mass of high, steep, knife-edged ridges, radiating from a centre, and divided by excessively steep valleys, the slopes so steep and covered with so dense a forest as to be practically impassable. Nobody ever thought of crossing the island from north to south or east to west, though fugitives sometimes fled into the upper valleys to escape a raid. It is only from the sea that the grandeur of this central

mass can be appreciated, for to one standing on the shore the slopes conceal the heights behind. But the views up the glens are very striking, and no glen is more beautiful than that of the Fautana river, which opens immediately behind Papeete. A road, passable for vehicles for two or three miles, leads across the level strip of gardens into an open valley along the banks of a rippling stream whose music fills the woods. Then one reaches a clear pool which goes by the name of Pierre Loti, the pseudonym of the famous French novelist, who used to bathe in it when he lived here. I followed his example, and found the water deliciously cool. Presently the track, now a footpath, begins to climb the slopes of the narrowing glen. One mounts through a dense forest, tree ferns mingled with splendid trees rising above the mangoes, and most beautiful of all were the bananas and wild coffee and orange trees. We knocked the golden fruit down with long sticks, and found the juice, though more watery than that of the Florida or the California orange, sweet and refreshing, for the sun was hot and the cooling wind scarcely felt in these deep recesses.

At last, through an opening in the branches one looks across the gorge to a magnificent cascade, springing in one bound from the edge of a precipice into a pool hidden in the forest six hundred feet below. Its dazzling white is doubly

beautiful against the dark green foliage which clothes the rocks, and from below the murmur of the stream rises through the silence. Behind the fall a bold peak rises three thousand feet above us, formidably steep, but clothed in verdure to the top. It might be climbed, but with incredible fatigue, for not only is it a slow work to force one's way through dense woods and the climbing plants that drape their trunks, but the higher ridges above the trees are covered with a dense matting formed by the creeping stems of a fern, which are hard and stiff as those of our common bracken. Mountaineering in the damp tropics is a very different matter from what it is in Alps or Rockies, or even in those parts of the woods of Maine or the Adirondacks where trails are wanting.

The lines of the Tahitian mountains are noble when seen towering above these deep valleys, whose sides are so precipitous that it is hard to understand how trees and ferns can cling to them. But the colour is even more wonderful. The too short sunsets are beautiful, but the dawns are indescribable. Five minutes before the sun mounts over the eastern ridge there comes a sudden glow of deep violet over the still dark westward slopes, and in a few moments it brightens to a flush of purple, and the whole air seems full of brilliance, an unearthly brilliance which no words can convey. It is a vision of

things undreamed of, it stirs one like the first chords of a Beethoven sonata, evolving feelings that can find their expression in music only. Beauty of line seems to belong to the intellectual part of man, colour to the emotional; and emotion is that which cannot be analysed but is known only by the effect it produces. It is a thrill; it is a revelation of some mysterious sympathy between Nature and Man which makes him think that the Spirit of Nature is rejoicing in its own sense of beauty, and is thus expressing its own delight in the miracles it can work. If any one finds what I am trying to convey unintelligible, I can only ask him to watch the "golden throned Dawn" throw her mantle over the hills of Tahiti and say what it means to him.

Grand are the mountain masses of Tahiti and lovely her shores, but still more beautiful are the peaks and shores of the smaller isle, Murea, which lies over against her, twelve miles across the boisterous sea. As the south-east trade blows strong through the channel between, the crossing in a small sailing boat is apt to be wet, for the surge is seething free. But the voyage is worth all, and more than all, the discomforts. Not many travellers make the voyage, but they seem to agree in thinking that the scenery is the most romantic anywhere in the Pacific Isles. The mountains, less lofty than those of Tahiti, have forms more varied and picturesque, sharp crests

rising to delicately tapering peaks, and descending in graceful sweeps to the valleys, once fertile and populous. Here along the shores of bays enclosed by bold headlands, are long rows of cocoa-nut palms tossing their feathery plumes in the breeze with a rising and falling music, across which sound the plash of waves against the rocks, and their measured beat as they fall upon the white sands. On one side the flowing purple of the sea, flowering into white when the breeze catches the wave crest, on the other the mountain spires, between the deep green of the trees, with their heads of red or yellow blossom. It is a landscape almost too perfect.

There is, as many a poet has told us, a sadness in the most perfect beauty. The *Odyssey* speaks of a place where the paths of Day and Night are near to one another, and we may take this phrase in a sense the poet did not mean, and set it beside what many a later poet has told us that with the joy in beauty there comes also the sadness of beauty. A native of Murea might well sorrow here to think—if indeed he knew—that one hundred and twenty years ago there were forty thousand people in his isle, where now there are but fifteen hundred :

> Tears from the depths of some divine despair
> Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes
> In looking on the happy autumn fields.

The sight of exquisite beauty, and the wonder

why it came and what it means sends us back to the primal problems of Nature and Life, opening long avenues of mystery, the ends of which are lost in shadow.

The sense of melancholy which floats over the scenery is heightened by compassion for a dying race. Everywhere one seems to see the ghostly figures of the native past melting into thin air, soon to be no more remembered. One of our last evenings in Tahiti was spent with a man, the son of an English father and a Tahitian mother who had been the head by descent of the great clan of the Tavas. At my request he gathered from the neighbourhood some thirty or forty of the native villagers at his house on the shore of Paparra, where a rushing stream from the mountains meets the ocean billows. Seated under a wide-spreading trellis work close to the house, roofed in by the boughs of a gigantic Bougainvillea, they lifted up their voices and began to sing, or rather to chant, in a soft long-drawn melody, the men's voices in a somewhat monotonous undertone, not unlike the drone of the Scottish bagpipes, while the women's voices formed a recitative in a higher key, and one single voice introduced at intervals a theme resembling a Swiss Jödel, which formed a recurring refrain. We could catch no words, for the language was unknown to us, and being composed almost entirely of vowels, the words

seemed to slide into one another. These people sang with spirit and feeling, their voices sweet and full of a strange pathos. Our host told us that the songs were in praise of the deeds of ancient heroes handed down from generation to generation, but there was in them no note of strife or triumph.

And under it all, when the chant sank low, one heard through the warm tropical night the rustling of the breeze in the palm trees and the break of the billows on the reef—sounds that were there before the Tavas came to Tahiti.

THE SCENERY OF NORTH AMERICA (1921)

THIRTY-FIVE years ago, when I was occupied in writing on the political and social institutions of the United States, it was a part of my plan to give some account of the scenery of North America, finding in it a feature of the country which will continue through all the ages to affect the mind of its inhabitants.

For this task, however, time and space failed me, for the book that embodied my political observations grew to a length that made it impossible to include descriptions of Nature as well as the doings of man.

I now attempt a less ambitious task, that of giving in a short and simple sketch the broad characteristics of American scenery, with a few observations on those general aspects of the American landscape which have most interest for the lover of natural beauty, and especially of mountain beauty and mountain grandeur.

First, let me, to use the famous phrase of Alexander Hamilton, "try to think continentally."

Everything in America is on a great scale, as

great as that of Asia, far greater than that of Europe, which is the part of the world whose scenery most Americans, as nearly all Englishmen, know best.

The American rivers are of immense length and volume. The lakes, or rather inland seas, are, with the exception of the Caspian, the largest in the world.

America's mountain ranges exceed those of Asia, the Rocky Mountains from New Mexico to near the frontier of Alaska being more than twenty-five hundred miles in length, as against the Himalayas of about fifteen hundred from the Indus at Attock to the point where the Tsanpo turns south out of Tibet to become the Brahmaputra in Assam. The Alleghenies are longer than the Alps, and so are the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains,—practically one continuous range.

This vast scale gives a large number of places in which such beauty as rivers and mountains display can be enjoyed, but it does not necessarily make more beauty. That depends upon other factors besides that of size, the chief of which are fineness of form and richness of colour.

Mountains, lakes, and rivers are the three features of scenery which most contribute to natural beauty, and of these three, mountains are the most important, the quality of river scenery and lake scenery depending mainly on the

character of their banks, whether these be low and monotonous or bold and varied. But before we come to the mountains, a few words may be said on the rivers, because their volume does have a grandeur of its own apart from the land through which they run.

The two greatest American rivers, the Mississippi (including its chief affluents) and the St. Lawrence, have this grandeur. One cannot sail upon or look down from a height upon either of these two mighty streams without being awed by the prodigious force that dwells in their currents.

The expanse of the St. Lawrence, as it roars down the rapids above Montreal, the broad bosom of the Mississippi, with a thousand yellow eddies, as it sweeps in great curves past New Orleans, have a grandeur all their own. Neither the Nile, nor the Volga, nor the Obi, nor the Indus, conveys the same impression of resistless power. Only the Yangtze has a like air of majesty, and this may be due to the sense that it is more closely than most streams associated with human life, because no other bears so many vessels.

As respects river beauty, besides the cliffs on the upper Missouri and Yellowstone, there was fifty years ago a charming stretch of more than two hundred miles along the Mississippi between St. Paul and Dubuque, the slopes, three to four

hundred feet high, covered by natural woods growing in comparatively open clumps, while the river swept in graceful curves from one to the other set of bluffs across the valley, which gradually widened as it descended from a mile to over seven or eight miles. This scenery could be enjoyed only from a vessel, and I believe that now, since there are railroads on both sides, the passenger steamers no longer ply.

Below St. Louis, the heights that bound the river valley being usually lower and more distant from the stream, the banks are not very interesting. Neither are those of the St. Lawrence, except at some points, such as Quebec.

The five great Lakes have almost everywhere low shores, but Georgian Bay, the northeastern bight of Lake Huron, contains many picturesque rocky and wooded islands, and there are some forty or fifty miles of bold craggy heights on the north coast of Lake Superior, sometimes rising to grandeur.

But Lake Champlain is a noble sheet of water as seen from the hills of Vermont, with the Adirondack peaks rising behind it, and the beauties of Lake George and of its very dissimilar sister, Lake Tahoe in California, are well known.

Now we come to the mountains: They count for most, not because there is not just as much genuine beauty to be found among soft hills and rolling pastures and along the banks of streams

in wooded dales, but because size is an element in grandeur, and grandeur impresses those who are insensible to the gentler charms of landscape.

The mountain masses of the United States may be divided into five groups: the Rockies, the Sierra Nevada, continued in the Cascade Range of Oregon and Washington, the Coast Range of California and Oregon, the Alleghenies, and those scattered heights which extend from northern Pennsylvania to New Brunswick. To them belong the Adirondacks of New York, the Green Mountains of Vermont, the White Mountains of New Hampshire, as well as the unnamed heights of western Massachusetts (culminating in Greylock) and the loftier summits of central Maine, culminating in Katahdin.

The Rocky Mountains are the backbone of the continent, a wide belt of highlands sometimes sinking into plateaus of from 5000 to 8000 feet, sometimes rising into peaks which carry some snow all the year.

The highest summits are found in Colorado, where many stand pretty close together. About forty exceed 14,000 feet, but none seems to reach 14,500. This uniformity of elevation and the absence of striking forms make the Colorado groups less interesting to the climber or painter than might be expected from their height, while the dryness of the climate prevents accumulations of snow sufficient to feed glaciers. Few have

forms sufficiently noble and peculiar to give them individuality.

Thus, though the number of peaks above 14,000 feet is double that to be found in the Alps, there are none that have that striking and distinctive quality which belongs to the Matterhorn, the Weisshorn, the Finsteraarhorn, and Schreckhorn, or even to lower peaks such as the Venediger Spitze, the Cimone della Pala, and the Sasso di Pelmo.

Pike's Peak in Colorado, the high point most conspicuous from the plains, and toward which, as a landmark visible far off to the east, many of the early settlers were directing their wagons seventy years ago, is a singularly tame and featureless object. Though the trees scattered over those rolling grassy uplands called the prairies give an element of beauty, the dry climate stunts the growth of forests and prevents them from enriching the landscape with sufficient verdure and variety.

Along with these defects, however, the Colorado Rockies have one feature of unsurpassed grandeur. What the hills do not give is found in the valleys. The deep and extremely narrow ravines which intersect the mountains, enclosed by precipitous walls thousands of feet high, with nothing at the bottom but a roaring stream and sometimes a road or a railway carried on a shelf cut out of the face of the precipice—these have sometimes a

grandeur and a picturesque variety of views up and down the winding glen unsurpassed in any part of the Western Hemisphere. The so-called Royal Gorge of the Arkansas River, just where it issues from the mountains west of Pueblo, is perhaps the most tremendous in the sternness of its crags and pinnacles, but there are others hardly less wildly grand.

North of Colorado the range of the Rockies sinks, but some high peaks occur in north-western Wyoming, and the scenery of the Yellowstone Lake and Yellowstone Canyon, with its splendid waterfalls, as well as that of the Geyser basins, is extremely interesting.

Still further north, on the frontier line between the State of Montana and Canada, lies a district of great beauty, with snow-covered peaks, occasionally bearing small glaciers, and picturesque lakes filling some of the valleys. Here the creation of a national park has happily provided for the preservation both of the scenery and of the wild animals.

From this point, where the Canadian Rockies begin, the tourist finds plenty of fine scenery for hundreds of miles to the north. The mountains do not reach the height of those in Colorado, but as the rainfall is heavier and the snow-line is much lower, considerable glaciers appear, and the mountain forms are much bolder and more varied. Here the forests are denser and the streams fuller,

especially on the west side of the range, which receives more rain.

All this region north of the Canadian Pacific Railway is still very imperfectly explored, and offers to climbers the chance of discoveries, together with ample scope for dangerous rock and ice work—forms of enjoyment now fashionable. Its scenery resembles that of the Alps more nearly than does any other part of North America.

From the Rockies let us turn westward across the Great American Desert to the parallel range of the Sierra Nevada in California. As its name conveys, it carries perpetual snow, but not enough snow to support glaciers, though these may be found in its prolongation into Oregon and Washington, where it bears the name of the Cascade Range.

Like the Rockies of Colorado, it has one or two summits exceeding 14,000 feet, but none reaching 15,000 feet; and, like them, it displays few peaks conspicuous by any nobility or grace of form. Seen from the wide valley or plain of central California on the west, the sky-line of the range is of nearly uniform height and disappointingly tame.

The canyons, however, are of extraordinary beauty, sometimes, as in the Yosemite Valley and the Kings River Canyon, presenting forms of singular grandeur. It would be hard to find

anywhere scenery more perfect. Lofty vertical walls of grey granite enclose a valley from half a mile to a mile wide, on whose level grassy floor tall trees rise along banks of an exquisitely clear-watered, gently flowing river. Waterfalls fling themselves over the edges of the cliffs.

The majesty of the precipices combines with the soft beauty of the vale to produce an effect such as it would be hard to find anywhere in Europe, though perhaps the Romsdal in Norway and the Val di Genova, in the Italian Alps north of Lago di Garda, come nearest. In the latter, however, the scale is smaller, while the grim sternness of the Romsdal is not relieved by trees and meadows basking in sunshine like that of the Yosemite, even among its mountains. California remains a sunny land.

In Oregon and Washington the monotony of the outline which the average level of the Cascade Range presents (about 6000 to 7000 feet) is broken by several huge snow-capped summits, the finest of which are Mount Hood, well seen from the city of Portland, and Mount Rainier, south of Seattle. Seen from the opposite or western coast of Puget Sound, Mount Rainier is a truly magnificent object, towering to a height of 14,408 feet, with glittering glaciers streaming down its slopes till they almost touch the thick dark forest beneath—a vast forest, impenetrable except where trails have been cut, in which nearly

every tree, Douglas firs and so-called "cedars" (*Thuja gigantea*) rises 300 feet into the air.

These superb evergreen conifers, along with the two *Sequoias* of California, the one (the Redwood) the tallest, and the other (the so-called "Big Trees" of the Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks) the thickest-stemmed trees in the world,[1] are the glory of the Pacific coast not only in their size, but also in the stateliness of their aspect, far transcending any trees of Europe, and approached only by a few in Australia, in tropical South America, and in the islands of Further India.

From these western peaks and forests let me lead the reader back to those of the Atlantic side of America, where also we shall find another type of scenery with its own peculiar charms, less sensational, but not less enjoyable by those who know how to enjoy.

The Appalachian mountain masses are as unlike the mountains of Colorado and California as they are unlike those of Europe, for, though they are in the same latitude, climate and vegetation, as well as rock-structure, are different.

In the Alleghenies there is nothing to suggest the Alps or the Pyrenees or the Caucasus, but sometimes one is reminded of the Swiss and French Jura. They are, when one crosses them

[1] Except, perhaps, the "Water Cypress" (the native Ahuehuete) of Mexico, the stem of which is not tall, but of prodigious girth.

from east to west, or west to east, a succession of smooth-topped ridges, generally parallel to one another, but with transverse ridges here and there, the average height above sea-level 3000 to 4000 feet, the highest top (in North Carolina) rising to 6711 feet.

The valleys between them are usually some miles wide, and all of the valley bottoms, as well as the slopes that are not under cultivation or pasture, are covered with dense wood. Here and there a long line of limestone crags runs along the mountain side for miles, its grey or bluish hue showing well against the rich woods above or below.

There are not many outstanding summits, for the ridges usually maintain the same level for many miles, so that the wayfarer might, if trails were cut along the ridge tops where the ridges are not above the timber-line, walk or ride for long distances with little ascent or descent, looking down upon the country on each side.

The lines are soft, and the scenery might be called monotonous were it not for the beauty of the forests, in which there is much variety, for in some places evergreen conifers clothe the higher slopes, while deciduous trees predominate below, prominent among them the tulip tree, with its tall, straight trunk rising like a stately column, sometimes for 60 or 80 feet to the point where it begins to throw out branches.

The superb colours which these woods take in October are chiefly due to the scarlet maples, mingled with the yellow tulip trees. In June the rhododendrons, abundant in many districts on the upper slopes, provide a mass of pink and purple glow comparable to that which their Himalayan sisters give to the traveller in Sikkim or Nepal.

There are no lakes, and the streams rippling or murmuring along channels mostly embowered in wood play no great part in the landscape, though now and then, as along the course of the river called "French Broad," in North Carolina and East Tennessee, they break into a series of picturesque rapids.

The Appalachian mountain masses of New York and the New England States are quite unlike the Alleghenies in their scenic character. There is hardly any limestone. The rocks are mostly gneiss or granite, or slates and mica schists, very old and very hard.

The aspect of the heights is rougher and sterner and the timber-line lower, so that the ground above 4000 feet is usually open and bare, while above 5000 feet it is often covered by loose rocks, decomposing under the storms of spring and autumn. Yet the hardness of the rocks gives few striking forms and the slopes are seldom precipitous, for this whole region has been worn down by the huge glaciers which

formerly covered it, rounding off the protuberances and carving out the valleys.

Mount Washington, the highest point, and its fellow-summits of the so-called "Presidential Range" in New Hampshire, are huge masses, breaking down steeply here and there into glens and into those deep semicircular hollows which the Scottish Highlanders call "corries," but rarely showing either a prominent peak or an imposing precipice.

It is only in such precipices as these that the rock climber finds his chance, for there are no spiry pinnacles or narrow arêtes to test his powers of clinging to a smooth and narrowing pillar of granite, or of executing a sort of tight-rope "stunt" by creeping along a knife-edge of rock. Neither are there deep and narrow gorges like the canyons of Colorado and Utah.

But the valleys have a quiet beauty into which one joyfully descends from the rugged stone-strewn wastes above. It would be hard to find anywhere a lovelier landscape, in a quiet style, not thrilling, but sweet and soothing, than that of Intervale, above North Conway (in New Hampshire), near which, under the bold ridge of Chocorua, the honoured and beloved philosopher, William James, used to spend his summers. The lines of the hills descending one behind another, fainter and fainter as they recede into the level dale through whose meadows a clear stream

meanders, blue or dark grey rock-falls showing here and there through the thick hill-side woods, clusters of houses giving a human touch to the scene, and in the far distance the snow-tipped top of Mount Washington,—these make up an unforgettable picture.

Prospects of like character recur every few miles as one journeys northward up the long stretch of the Connecticut River Valley between New Hampshire and Vermont; nor are they wanting among the wooded hills of Western Massachusetts.

The visitor from Northern or Central Europe is surprised to find that he cannot roam at will over these hills, not that any game preservers stop him, but because there is little open grassy land upon the middle and higher slopes, only thick woods untraversable except by the few trails. The wood is seldom cut except where it is easy to drag or float to a railroad, so high is the cost of labour.

Thus upland pastures, enlivened by the cattle and chalets, such as those which delight us in the Alps and Pyrenees and the Jura and the German Schwarzwald, are wanting. Here and there one comes on a farm deserted by a family which has gone West, the barn falling to pieces, but the orchard still bearing apples which no one comes up to gather. It is only the summer campers from the cities that wander up the glens and on to the bare, wind-swept heights.

A wide view is always interesting and suggestive, but the prospects from these mountain tops want the variety of those which the climber enjoys in Scotland and Wales and in the hill regions of Central Europe. Here the eye ranges over a vast expanse of high country, mostly either bare and rocky above 3500 feet or thickly wooded lower down, with scarce any upstanding peaks to fix the eye.

It is rather in the valleys that the characteristic charm of New England scenery is to be found. The villages are pretty despite the unlovely frame houses, for they are surrounded by elms, more graceful with their feathery pendent boughs than are the elms of England, and the stately maples line the streets and lanes. Every house has its wide, well-kept grass plot, open to street or road, and the whole village seems to swim in verdure.

The lakes of New England and northern New York must not be forgotten, for some of them, like Moosehead Lake in Maine, have a wild, and others, like Lake George and the Saranacs, a soft and placid beauty. But none of them, not even Lake Champlain, can be ranked with the lakes of Switzerland and Austria, still less with those of North Italy—Maggiore, Como, and Garda.

I have left to the last the supreme charm of East American scenery. It is a charm to be

enjoyed during only six weeks in the year—from the beginning of October to the middle of November, during the "Indian summer," a season scarcely known to Europe except in middle Italy and Greece.

The later part of the autumn gives to the woods a wealth of brilliant colour nowhere to be found in the Old World, unless perhaps in Korea and Japan. It is chiefly in the maples that these colours are found, for they turn to superb crimsons and scarlets, but they are seconded by the many-tinted yellows of beech and birch, while white pines, interspersed among the deciduous trees, with their deep yet tender green, less dark than that of the Scotch fir, present a contrast against which the maples glow all the more vividly.

The loveliest hues of English woodlands in May, such as one sees in the valley of the Wye, hues more delicate than those of autumn, make no such impressions of Nature's resources as do the forests of Eastern America. To see these colours anywhere between Carolina and Canada, but best perhaps among the lakes of Maine, is worth a voyage across the Atlantic. The hill-sides seem ablaze with them, a piece of Nature's most exquisite handiwork, yet they are not violent or crude, no more than is the finest cashmere shawl or Persian rug.

These beauties are in no danger, like so much of the world's beauty, of perishing at the hands of

man, for the woods have not sufficient economic value, at least where they are far from a railroad, to render it profitable to turn timber into lumber.

The scenery of sea coasts makes so large a part of what the American visitor finds to attract him in Ireland, Scotland, and Norway, that a passing word ought to be given to the coast landscapes of America.

The Atlantic shores are low for thousands of miles, all the way from New York to the Mexican frontier, and may be left out of account, though there are pretty bits among the "keys" on the coast of Florida. It is therefore only the New England coast from Long Island Sound to the Bay of Fundy that comes into the sort of inventory I am trying to make of the scenic wealth of the continent.

Most of this north-eastern coast is well known. Newport and Cape Cod and the north shore of Massachusetts Bay and the "Islands of the Pointed Firs" that fringe the deeply indented shores of Maine are too familiar to need description, and no one who has ever looked out from the highest hills in Mount Desert Island on the wonderful sea- and land-scape of "promontory, creek and bay," with its winding channels and rockbound isles, can ever forget its enchanting variety.

Neither need Niagara be spoken of. Fifty years ago it was the great natural wonder of

America which every European traveller made it his first pleasure to see. Since then the falls of the Zambesi, in South Africa, and the falls of the upper Paraná (Iguazu), in South America, the former higher, and the latter wider than Niagara, have become well known, and in the United States the Yellowstone Geysers and the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River vie with it as marvels of Nature.

Moreover, another thing has happened: Niagara has suffered at the hand of man. An unlovely suburb of the town has grown up on the American shore, and the cliff on that side is defaced by small spouts of water spurting out from holes pierced in the rock connected with the channel constructed for the power plant.

Worst of all, the flow of water over the two great falls has been diminished, and is now distinctly thinner in the American fall than it was in 1870. One who remembers the scene as it was in that year sees it now with a sense of sad regret. One wishes that it had been possible to preserve so exquisite a picture as the banks clothed with natural wood, the majestic torrent of green water, bright and clear as crystal, pouring over the precipice into the seething whirlpools beneath, presented to the first explorers.

Whether the gain to the companies that have developed the electric power and to the Canadian communities that have utilised it for electric

railways, doubtless to the convenience of the public, has been worth the loss of much of the delight which the falls gave to the two nations, is a question not to be examined here.

It remains to speak of one other feature, and that not the least remarkable, of North American scenery—the Great Deserts. They fill parts of the States of California, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming and Idaho, most of Utah, nearly all of Arizona and Nevada, in the last of which the population is less than one inhabitant to the square mile and is not likely to increase unless new mines of silver or copper are discovered.

The American deserts are more beautiful than those which I have seen in North Africa or North Arabia (except, indeed, in the Sinai Peninsula) or in South Africa or Western South America or Iceland. Of the Mongolian and Australian deserts I know only the fringes.

The wildernesses which a number of my readers are most likely to have seen are those between which lies that long, narrow, winding strip of cultivated land which the Nile redeems from aridity and which Virgil calls Green Egypt. To the west of Egypt the Libyan desert, a part of the Sahara, is generally, like that behind Tripoli, flat, with low rocky hills here and there and (except at sunrise and sunset) a dull and dreary stretch of brown.

But the American deserts are adorned by

some noble isolated mountain groups besides the masses of the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada which bound them on the east and west. Such are the St. Francis Mountains in northern Arizona, clothed with snow for a large part of the year.

Such, further to the south, are some bold, sharp groups of peaks along the line of the Southern Pacific Railway. These heights, mostly standing detached and visible at long distances in the extraordinarily dry, clear air, give a striking impression of desolation and remoteness. They seem out of all relation to the life and work of man.

Here even a hermit could not support life in a cave. No water, no reverent admirer to bring him food, as the ascetic Buddhist walled up in a crevice of the rock is fed by the offerings of the pious. These mountain forms are almost terrible in the hard blaze of sunlight that sharpens their outlines.

But the peculiar charm of the desert, scarcely appreciable by those who have not seen it, lies in the combination of barrenness, and the sense of lonely immensity which the wide range of vision gives, with the most tender and delicate tints of colour. In Arizona especially the varieties of rock and the inequalities of surface, scattering patches of light and shadow over the expanse, give corresponding varieties of hue, so that there is no monotony, not even at high noon, when other

deserts have a uniform glare, be their surface black or brown or grey.

But it is when the sun dips toward the horizon that the magic of light has its most perfect work, bringing out a whole range of tints vivid yet delicate, for which we have no names, for they pass by faint gradations from pink to crimson and crimson to purple and purple to violet.

Every stone seems to glow like a jewel before it dies into darkness as the sun departs, while the distant violets of a limestone cliff turn to the grey of twilight. Then night falls. There are no small birds to twitter, no owls to hoot; but the melancholy cry of the small desert wolf (the coyote) is heard through the silence.

Two desert views rise to my memory as splendid in their amplitude. One is that from the hill behind Salt Lake City, where there used to be—perhaps is still—a military post. In the foreground beneath is the city, its suburbs so well planted as to seem encircled by and embowered in trees, though trees grow only by the help of irrigation. Beyond it, westward, are the shining levels of the Great Salt Lake, and beyond them lofty peaks, with desert valleys running up between the distant ranges that fade away, line behind line, to the north, west, and south-west.

This view, best seen in the afternoon, is worthy of the brush of Claude Lorraine or Turner.

The other prospect is that over the Painted

Desert in Arizona, looking north and north-east from a point above the Grand Canyon, some twelve miles east of the railway station at the Bright Angel Trail. Here one gazes over a far-stretching plain, dotted here and there with rocky eminences and with mysterious snow-tipped mountains in the dim distance. Dark spots of vegetation, coniferous trees that can live even in this arid land, alternate with rock faces of red and yellow, and the sense of vast space is heightened by the innumerable varieties of colour. One longs to wander among the deep canyons that seam this wilderness, each with its own labyrinth of crags and tumbled rocks.

Having now reached the edge of the Grand Canyon, I must devote a few sentences to that unique wonder of the world.

This gorge of the River Colorado, many hundreds of miles long, is most accessible at the point to which a branch railroad has been built. Here the canyon is 6000 feet deep and about twelve miles wide from the one edge to the other of the gulf which the swift torrent has excavated, cutting its way down through successive lines of horizontal strata, sandstones, white, yellow, and red, and limestones, grey and blue.

At the bottom one finds the primeval rock, a hard red porphyry, on which all the sandstones and limestones were deposited during the untold ages that elapsed before these strata were raised

to form dry land. Thereafter began that process of cutting-down through the strata which has already lasted for countless centuries and is still in progress.

Wonderful are the colours of these strata, superimposed one upon the other, and they stand strongly out, for in this dry air no mosses or lichens cling to their precipitous faces.

On each side of the main canyon, comparatively short, narrow gorges have been carved out by streams when a sudden storm has flooded the plateau behind and forced the water to discharge itself into the great canyon.

Round the upper parts of these secondary canyons, which have hollowed out semicircular recesses or cirques in the line of the Grand Canyon, the horizontal strata of the Grand Canyon are continued, prolonging what we might call the decorative scheme of colour up their recesses.

Such a display of rock colours laid out like bands of blue and yellow and red on a ribbon and stretching for hundreds of miles is seen nowhere else in the world, the nearest approach to it being, I have heard, in the cliffs that stand along the middle course of the Amur River, in north-eastern Asia.

Why this deep hole in the ground should inspire more wonder and awe than the loftiest snow mountain or the grandest waterfall I will not attempt to explain, but it does.

One cannot leave off gazing and wondering. Beauty and grandeur enhance one another. Morning, noon, and evening the same unchanging precipices show their unchanging colours, cliffs looking across at cliffs as they have done for millions of years and will do for millions more.

One descends by a very steep and winding footpath to the river at the bottom, and ascends again, seeing all there is to see, but the spell is the same when one emerges. The vastness and the changelessness create a sense of solemn silence. This intense silence is the most awesome thing. Why does this strange panorama produce so profound an effect? Is it because colour impressions are usually the most changeful of all the impressions we receive—since colour varies with atmospheric conditions, exciting rather than stilling perception and mental reactions—that the eternal steadfastness and mathematical rigidity of these colours grasp and fix and seem to hypnotise the beholder? I do not know. Anyhow, the effect is what I have tried to describe. I am giving the experience of others as well as my own.

Comparing the scenery of North America with that of Europe, the first and obvious contrast is that of scale. Everything is large, and the most interesting pieces of scenery lie far apart, with great, dull spaces interposed, for between Buffalo and Chicago, between Pittsburgh and Denver, there

is not much natural beauty to admire. Europe is small, and becomes still smaller when we remember that the northern and eastern two-thirds of it, all the region from the Straits of Dover to Asia at the Ural Mountains, and from the Baltic at Riga to the Black Sea at Odessa, have no scenic value. The beauties of Europe, if we except the coasts of the British Isles and of Norway, are nearly all in the Mediterranean countries, and along the northern slopes of the Alps. Within these limits there is beauty everywhere, perhaps most abundant and most perfect in Italy. Few, if any, regions in North America bring the stern beauties and the soft beauties together, as, for instance, in the Italian valleys of the Alps, or in Corsica, or at Berchtesgaden.

Neither is there in North America any view of snow mountains so exquisite, in the combination of beauty and variety of mountain form, as that from the heights above the city of Sion, on the northern side of Valais in Switzerland, where the giants of the Pennine chain rise all the way from Monte Leone on the east, to Mont Blanc girt by his aiguilles in the west, with the Dom and Monte Rosa, Lyskamm and Weisshorn, Rothhorn, Matterhorn, Dent Blanche, and Grand Combin standing in a glittering row behind the valley of the Rhone.

Still less is there anything so tremendous as the great views in the Himalaya, such as that

from Singalila, on the border of Sikkim and Nepal, where the eye, ranging over hundreds of miles, discovers forty summits exceeding 20,000 feet in height, including the highest peak on the earth's surface.[1]

But, on the other hand, neither Europe nor Asia nor South America has a prospect in which sea and woods and snow mountains are so united in a landscape as in the view from Puget Sound of the great peaks that rise like white towers above the dark green forests of the Cascade Range, nor any valley gorges wilder than those of the Rockies, more beautiful than those of the Sierra Nevada.

In richness of colours, whether we think of the autumn woods of Maine or the rocks of the Western Canyons, America is pre-eminent.

Comparisons have their interest, but they are tiresome and profitless when they attempt to place above or beneath one another things essentially different. If I were to prolong this article by comparing the famous cities the same conclusion would be reached. The charm of Constantinople or Bombay is not that of Peking or San Francisco.

One word, however, I will add on a comparison

[1] Out of the different native names which this supreme summit bears, it would seem that Chomo Lungma has the best claim to be adopted. It is called by the Indian Survey Mount Everest, a name given in honour of one of its former heads, and British climbers are now attempting to scale it.—J. B.

sometimes made between European and American scenery, which raises an interesting point for discussion. Some travellers say that American scenery is not romantic.

This sets one asking: What does the epithet mean? Is the romantic element in natural beauty something in the landscape itself, a particular charm of line or colour which thrills us with emotion and stimulates imagination? Or does it depend on some association with human life, such as incidents in history, or references in poetry, which bring Nature into relation with man, and bathe rocks and woods and river banks in an atmosphere of human feeling?

If the latter view, which seems to be the common view, be correct, it would follow that romance cannot be looked for in regions where nothing ever happened—nothing, that is to say, of which civilised men have knowledge—or over which no poet ever waved his magic wand.

New countries, such as Western America and Siberia and Australia, cannot, therefore, have anything romantic in their landscapes till the landscapes have been associated with moving incidents, either real or imagined, by the poet's mind.

But is it clear that the latter view is correct? Are there not regions, such as parts of Western America, where the human associations, historic and literary, are absent, but in which particular

pieces of scenery affect our emotions and imagination in a way practically indistinguishable from that in which European scenery is deemed to do?

If this be so, the distinction drawn between the two continents disappears or becomes a mere question of words. The influence of scenery on emotion is, however, a large subject, too large to be entered on here, and I leave it, content to have suggested a question fit to be considered at leisure.

THE ALTAI MOUNTAINS (1913)

Since July 1914, no West European or American, except those few officers who were sent out on military missions, has had a chance of travelling along the great Transcontinental Railway which connects Western Europe with China and Japan; so before I come to speak of the Altai Mountains something may be said of this wonderful highway of commerce, along which I passed in 1913, on my return to England from Japan.

From Calais, on that arm of the Atlantic which we call the English Channel, to Vladivostok, on that arm of the Pacific we call the Sea of Japan, it is more than 7000 miles, while from New York to San Francisco it is only about 3000 miles. An interesting comparison may be made between these two transcontinental routes, each of which links the Atlantic with the Pacific.

Each railroad when it leaves the Atlantic coast runs, the one eastward towards Russia, the other westward towards the Pacific for more than 1500 miles through civilised and thickly peopled regions, mostly agricultural, though studded with cities. Each when it approaches the centre of its

continent climbs a mountain range and passes over vast tracts of wild and thinly inhabited country, sometimes through deserts, sometimes through forests. Each crosses great rivers ; each coasts along the shore of a large and beautiful inland sea. Each emerges finally from the solitudes of its middle course into a rich and prosperous land, and finds its end at a famous harbour — the American Transcontinental at San Francisco, the Asiatic Transcontinental at the equally spacious and well-sheltered, if less beautiful, port of Vladivostok.

Along both roads there is a great variety of scenery, much of it striking, but the Asiatic line has an interest that is all its own in the variety of the peoples as well as of the landscapes through which it passes. One language only rules from the Hudson to the Golden Gate, whereas, between Calais and Vladivostok many tongues are spoken and many races of men—Hollanders and Germans, Poles and Lithuanians and Russians, Bashkirs and Buriats, Manchus and Chinese—have their homes.

The best way to enjoy the Asiatic Transcontinental journey is to begin at the west end and travel east, whereas the American Transcontinental should be taken from the east toward the west, and for the same reason, viz., that it is more interesting to start from civilisation and pass by degrees into wilder regions, which, being more solitary and more picturesque, keep curiosity

constantly alive, than it is to reverse the process. So, although it was my own fortune to have to travel from the east to the west, it is better to describe the journey the reverse way, *i.e.* from Western Europe to far Eastern Asia.

Of the comparatively familiar 1600 miles or thereabouts from Calais to Moscow, nothing need be said, except that so far as the aspects of Nature are concerned, this part of the route is comparatively monotonous, for the surface is an almost unbroken level, only one group of low mountains in Westphalia rising out of the sandy plains of Western and Central Germany. From Moscow onward the land, though generally flat, has its undulations; but to the eye of the naturalist it continues to be somewhat uniform, for there are very few deep railway cuttings to indicate the rocks that lie beneath the surface, and as the country traversed is nearly all either cultivated or forest-clad, few wild plants are seen, and these, the latitude being the same, are of the usual Central European types.

The first striking view is reached at the town of Samara, where the broad Volga, greatest of European rivers, is crossed by a long and lofty bridge, more than 500 miles above the point where it enters the Caspian Sea. Here for the first time one feels a change in the air, for here begins the dryness of the Asiatic steppes.

In 1876, when I sailed down the Volga from

Nijni Novgorod to Saratov, the railway ended at Samara. Thither, in that day, consumptive patients used to come from Northern and Middle Russia to drink *koumiss* (mare's milk), and gain strength in the invigorating breezes that come from the south-east over the arid plains that stretch all the way to Khiva, and Samara was then the summer sanatorium of Russia, as the south coast of Crimea was the winter resort of those rich enough to travel so far.

A hundred miles beyond the Volga blue heights appear on the eastern horizon, and we quickly enter the foothills of the Ural range, their gently rounded slopes descending into charming villages, pasture alternating with open woods which distantly suggest those of the "Parks" of Colorado—woods not thick, because the climate is dry, but scattered in picturesque clumps over hill and dale.

As the line pierces deeper into the mountains, the glens are narrower and are filled with a denser forest, out of which bare summits rise to heights of three or four thousand feet. It is a lonely land, with few and small villages, but it is rich in gold and silver, copper, coal, and platinum—from here comes nearly all of the world-supply of that last-named metal,—with an extraordinary variety of rare and valuable stones, including malachite and cornelian.

The train takes about seven hours to traverse

these romantic highlands, stopping here and there at a busy mining town, and passing an obelisk which, at the summit level, marks the frontier of Europe and Asia. Thereafter it emerges suddenly (for the Asiatic slope is shorter and steeper than the European) on the boundless plains of Siberia, here bare and almost waterless as are those of Arizona, but drearier, for there are no rocks or hollows to diversify the surface, no glimpses of distant peaks to break the level line of the horizon. It is the dullest part of the whole journey from ocean to ocean. But presently one comes, at the thriving town of Omsk (which was in 1918 the headquarters of Admiral Koltchak in his campaign against the Bolsheviks), to the first of the five great Siberian rivers, the Irtish, which, having risen far away to the south in the hills of Western Mongolia, is at this point on its northern path to join the Obi and send its waters into the Arctic Sea.

To the Obi itself, an even fuller stream, we come in eight hours more, and see a flotilla of steamers moored to its bank. But of it more anon, for it is up the Obi one voyages to the Altai. From this point onward the country is rougher and thinly inhabited, much of the land being a sort of forest swamp, which the people call *Taiga*.

On each side of the railway track the woods have been cut back to leave an open space of

fifty to eighty yards wide, so that sparks or coals from the locomotive should not start a conflagration. This wide grassy belt is in summer covered with a luxuriant growth of tall flowers on each side of the line, giving the effect of what gardeners call a "herbaceous border," with the railroad track representing the gravel walk which runs between the two flower-beds. Behind stand the pines, with their tall, straight, reddish trunks, contorted boughs, and dark green foliage, beautiful as are those of the Scottish Highlands.

After many hours' journey through this delightful parterre, the traveller sees beneath him, filling the bottom of a valley three hundred feet deep, the grandest of all the Siberian rivers, the Yenisei, with the city of Krasnoiarsk lying on the slope between the station and the stream.

This is the finest view of a river from a railroad I can remember to have anywhere seen. The Mississippi at St. Louis and the St. Lawrence at Montreal are as wide, and may have as great a volume; but their banks are comparatively low. Here the *coup d'œil* of the bold heights, and the mighty stream filling the long hollow that winds away to the north between rocks and thick woods, is magnificent. The stream is seen to advantage from both sides, for the track stoops down more than a hundred feet to cross the valley by a lofty bridge, and rises again as much on the eastern slope, making a wide semicircle.

Thirty hours more brings us to the fourth great river at Irkutsk, that capital of eastern Siberia for which the contending Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik armies fought so long in 1917 and 1918. It is the Angara, bearing down a tremendous torrent of clear green water from Lake Baikal, which is reached shortly afterwards.[1]

Lake Baikal is one of the great inland seas of the world, nearly as long as Lake Superior, though not so wide, for in clear weather the eye can reach from the one shore to the other. It fills a bow-shaped depression four hundred miles long, between high mountains dipping steeply into its waters; and on its coasts there are only wood-cutters and fishermen, with a few hunters. Till long past the middle of last century, some while before the Transcontinental railroad was built, there was no way from Western Siberia into the lands of the Amur River and Manchuria except by a ferry across the lake of some twenty or more miles in the summer, or by sledging over its icy floor in winter. The travellers of those days loved to describe the midnight drive under a brilliant moon lighting up the snowy ranges on both sides.

From here the line runs for many miles along its western shore on a shelf cut out of the steep

[1] The fifth great river is the Lena, which the Transcontinental Railway does not cross. It lies off to the N.E., its source being north of Lake Baikal. I do not reckon the Amur, as it hardly belongs to Siberia and discharges itself not into the Arctic Ocean but into the Pacific.

mountain-side, high above the waves of the sea, with frequent tunnels cut through projecting cliffs.

It was supposed, when fighting began there in and after 1917, that any retreating force would be likely to cover its rear by destroying the track in some part of the shelf, behind or above which no passage could be found. I have not, however, been able to learn whether this has happened, but the railroad was certainly passable in 1921.

The line runs high along the curving shores for forty or fifty miles, affording a succession of splendid prospects. Beneath are woods, mostly of birch and aspen, richly yellow in autumn, and wherever they have been cleared the space is filled by a profuse growth of the tall willow herb (*Epilobium angustifolium*), called in North America the fire-weed, whose deep pink blossoms make a waving sea of colour, stretching mile after mile till all tints melt into the blue of distance.

Solemn and lonely in its mountain setting, the Baikal yields in grandeur to only one other fresh-water sea, Lake Titicaca, on the plateau of Bolivia, above which tower the peaks of the Cordillera Real, the finest line of snows in all the ranges of the Andes.

Presently the railway, leaving the lake, turns south up the valley of the Selenga River, passes the town of Chita, and thence climbs the slopes, and threads for many miles the ravines of the great

mass of rugged and almost uninhabited highlands, with no conspicuous outstanding peaks, which figure on our maps as the Yablonoi Mountains. I have never been able to hear of any traveller or naturalist who has explored their recesses. Beyond these come wide plains, and beyond these plains another mountain range, till at Harbin the line divides, one branch turning south and then west to Peking, the other south-east to Vladivostok. Henceforward there are no more Russians to be seen, nor the Buddhist or spirit-worshipping tribes over whom Russia rules, for we are now entering Manchuria, where the population is mainly Chinese. The industrious Celestials, no longer wearing pig-tails (for the republic abolished that custom), swarm out from overcrowded China in all directions ; and had not the Russians about the middle of the last century established their power in the country south of the Baikal and all along the Amur River to the sea, these regions would have soon been peopled by Chinese emigrants. Efforts were made to keep them out of the country north of the Amur, and some thirty years ago many who had settled there were cruelly driven into the river and drowned. Little did the agents of the Tsars in these remote countries reck of human life.

The last part of the way, from Harbin to the Sea of Japan, is, perhaps, the most beautiful, for the soil is fertile, the pastures excellent, the land-

scapes charming, and the wealth of flowers surpasses even that of Western Siberia. So attractive is the country that after seven or eight days of unbroken travel from Moscow the summer tourist comes reluctantly to the end of his journey. Very different are the feelings of the winter traveller, who has for those eight seen nothing but a white waste around him, with only seven hours of daylight in his day.

All use of the railroad, except for war purposes, stopped in 1914. When will any tourist find the journey possible once more? So soon as peace and order have been restored under whatever Government may rule, that Government will begin to repair and equip the railroad; but to do this from end to end, through a country impoverished by years of war and blockade, will be no short or easy task.

So much for the Transcontinental Railway, the one great factor in the social and economic life of Siberia which those who wish to understand the country must keep always in mind. Now let me turn to Western Siberia in particular, and of the excursion into the Altai Mountains of which I have spoken.

In 1913 Siberia was just as open to travellers as was European Russia, but everywhere in the Tsar's dominions whosoever sought to diverge from a regular railway or steamboat route found, as I had also found when travelling in the

Caucasus thirty-seven years before, that he could not get along without facilities granted by the Government.

Before starting for the mountains it was therefore necessary to obtain letters of recommendation to local authorities, and the official permission to call for horses at post stations. To get these indispensables we went to Tomsk, the administrative capital of Western Siberia, to present to the Provincial Governor the credentials I had brought with me.

Tomsk lies sixty miles north of the Transcontinental railroad, to which it is joined by a branch line. Why, considering the importance of the city, was not the main line made to run through it, there being no engineering difficulties to prevent this? Every traveller asks this question, and receives—so, at least, I was told—the same answer. The Tomsk people did not pay a sufficiently high "gratification" to those officials with whom it rested to lay out the course of the railway.

I was reminded of a like question and a like answer when, three years before, being then on the west coast of South America, I inquired why large sums were being expended on the construction of harbour works at Antofagasta when, only a few miles away to the north, there was a better sheltered bay at Megillones. "Because," was the reply, "there was nobody at Megillones

to put up the money that was needed to outbid the people who wanted the harbour to be at Antofagasta."

We arrived at Tomsk at 1 A.M., and on stepping out of the cars were received by a bevy of uniformed officials, headed by the chief of the police, a dignified personage, decorated with seven medals and six Orders (crosses and ribbons). In Russia under the old régime Orders and medals were distributed to all civilians according to the length of their service and the satisfaction it had given to the superiors in the department, and the medals determined and indicated the salary paid—a useful method in a bureaucracy both of securing perfect subservience and of impressing a respectful awe upon the mind of the undecorated private citizen.

We were driven three miles through woods to the city—in Siberia, as in India, railway stations are apt to be far from towns—and lodged in a just tolerable hotel, where, however, though it was August, no window was open or could be opened, and baths were unattainable. No one spoke anything but Russian, and as I had forgotten the little I had learned thirty-seven years before, the position was difficult. Our Police Chief's sense of duty and politeness compelled him to remain along with us, standing just inside the door of our room as if on guard, though it was now 2 A.M., and our grateful and frequently repeated bows and smiles did not have the

desired effect of intimating to him that his further stay was needless. In this predicament I searched up and down through a Franco-Russian phrase book, finding, as usually happens, no sentence that fitted the occasion, but many that seemed designed for occasions far less likely to occur. Among them I recollect this one: "Have you seen my crocodile?"—a question singularly inappropriate in an empire none of whose waters are warm enough to make that animal feel at home. At last, however, we found words equivalent to "Many thanks" and "Farewell," and the highly decorated Tchinovnik (the Russian term for members of the Civil Service) departed, returning next morning to bring with him a Danish gentleman, a mining engineer, who spoke English and proved very helpful, discovering for us an interpreter to accompany us on our journey. We were surprised to find in a city of sixty thousand people no permanent inhabitant, except one or two university professors, who seemed able to speak either German or French.

When we awoke next morning all the bells were clanging, for it was the "Name Day" of the Tsarevitch, the delicate child destined one day, if his thin thread of life could be kept from breaking, to mount the imperial throne and rule over nigh two hundred millions of men.

All the functionaries of the city—military, civil, and educational, each decked out with his Orders

and medals—flocked to the cathedral to attend the solemn service in honour of the day. The service was long, as those of the Orthodox Church always are, and only the sweet voices of the choir relieved its tedium, all the more weariful because there were no seats. We knew that all over the Russian dominions, from the Baltic to the Pacific, from Tiflis and Tashkent to the Arctic Sea, every official as well as every priest and bishop was imploring the blessing of God upon the boy whose life was so precious. As the worshippers bowed and knelt, as the voices sank and rose, what a wonderful thing, one thought, is this Russian Caesarism, what a hold it has on the obedience, if not the affection, of its subjects, buttressed as it is by the Orthodox Church, with an omnipresent army of officials to execute its will. But within five years the innocent boy was, with his parents and his sisters, murdered in a cellar at Ekaterinburg, in the Ural Mountains, and not a Russian voice throughout what had been the Empire of the Tsars was raised in anger or in lamentation.

Tomsk is a large, irregularly built town, straggling down from a hill on which stand the cathedral, with its three bulbous domes, and the huge barrack-like university, where law and medicine were being taught to a thousand students, to the River Tom, which is navigable for small steamers and carries a considerable

trade. From the other side of the stream the place looks quite picturesque, brightened by the colours of the church domes and roofs, painted blue or light green, and by those of the house roofs also often red or green; so the general aspect has, from without, a gaiety which the interior belies. Of the inhabitants, all Russians —for the thinly scattered native tribes live far off to the north,—about one-third are exiles or the descendants of exiles. Depressing as Europeans think that life must be on a featureless plain, where snow lies more than half the year, they seem as cheerful as men are in Berlin or Rotterdam or London.

In Tomsk one strange tale is told and universally believed, that the Tsar Alexander the First did not expire at Taganrog on the Don in 1825 as was supposed, but caused the corpse of a soldier who had died in the military hospital of that town to be prepared for interment and buried as his own body, while he himself secretly stole away in the garb of a pilgrim and travelled on foot among a troop of emigrants to Tomsk, where he thereafter lived a religious life as a hermit till extreme old age. It was said there were men still alive in Tomsk who, in their youth, had seen him, but no one could say whether the hermit had himself encouraged the belief that he had been Tsar. If he did, which I do not believe —for my informants seemed to think that he

never said a word about himself to any one—he gained nothing thereby, except freedom from molestation and additional veneration from the people. Slight as the evidence for the story seems to be, there was nothing in Alexander's character to make such conduct incredible. He was emotional and pietistic, and a man who felt that he was not strong enough to remake things according to his aspirations might well long to shuffle off the responsibilities of absolute power.

Now, before I come to the journey up the Obi River, a few words on the Altai. It is the name given to the south-western part of a great mountain mass which divides the lowlands of Siberia from the plateau of Central Asia, sending forth on one side the great rivers that flow north to the Arctic Ocean, and on the other, the southern and drier side of the range, smaller streams that lose themselves in the lakes or marshes of Mongolia.

Most of this vast mountain land is unexplored, and only a small part has been surveyed for the purpose of locating the mineral wealth it is believed to contain. When, as a boy, I had sought to learn something about this land from books of travel, I was able to discover scarcely any that had aught to tell; and when I began to read the history of the East, curiosity was re-awakened by finding that from the very beginning of authentic history all these regions to the north

and to the east of the Black Sea and the Caspian had remained unvisited and unknown. From the days of Homer to those of Marco Polo no European had penetrated their recesses. They were not only unknown and mysterious, but also terrible, for out of the mists that shrouded them there came from time to time hosts of fierce horsemen, who broke like sudden thunder-storms on the civilised peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean and of Europe. As the Kimerians and Scythians had descended on Media and Asia Minor and Syria long before the Christian era, so in the fifth century Attila led his Hunnish hordes across Pannonia and Germany into Italy and Gaul, to be repulsed at Aquileia, and defeated at Châlons. Still later came Avars and Bulgarians and Magyars, and in the thirteenth century there broke upon Europe the tremendous invasion of the Mongols under Genghis Khan.

Of this region of mystery and the great mountains that rise in its midst, it seemed possible to receive some impressions by diverging to the south up the Obi River and returning downstream to rejoin the line of homeward journey along the Transcontinental Railway. So we seized the opportunity. Everybody told us that we should have plenty of discomforts, and even hardships to encounter, but, being seasoned travellers, we were not deterred, and even, perhaps, put upon our mettle to see whether

we were not still fit to "rough it" as in former days.

To reach the glaciers and climb the great peaks would be impossible, for we had no tent or other equipments for high mountaineering, but we could at least have a glimpse sufficient to make the mountains live as realities in memory, and give a local habitation and a name in our thoughts to regions round which imagination had played ever since one had first read of Scythia and the Massagetae.

Our point of departure was the town of Novo Nikolaievsk, a mushroom growth of the years since the opening of the Transcontinental line, for it stands at the meeting-point of two great lines of trade, that of the Obi, which brings down minerals as well as grain and butter from the south, and that of the railway which carries these products eastward to Irkutsk and beyond to the Pacific, westward to Russia and Germany. The town reminded me of the new cities in the newest parts of America, with its big warehouses rising fast along half-finished roadways, while the untouched prairie, dotted here and there with scrub birches, lay just outside the houses. In ten years from 1913, had peace continued, Novo Nikolaievsk would have become the most populous place in all Siberia, with, perhaps, two hundred thousand people. By now (1922), it may have gone to pieces.

Steamers lay thick along the river bank, and in one of these we embarked. The cabins were small and rough, but clean: the food, scanty and unappetising, was sufficient to support life: and though the days were hot with a strong August sun, the nights were cool and the dry air of the steppe deliciously fresh and invigorating.

From the deck one looked over a wide, smooth plain, the vast dome of heaven resting on a level horizon, the uniformity of the prospect in all directions broken only by the sweeps and curves of the mighty river. The monotony is redeemed by the grandeur and the variety of the stream itself. Nothing is grander than a great river. It embodies the irresistible strength of the forces of Nature and their changeful activity, ever the same and yet ever different, here with a glassy surface, there breaking into wavelets or swirling with deep eddies, making and unmaking islets, here eating away the bank, there piling up sand to enlarge it. It is older than man, and will outlive him: it is a part of his life, serving him in many ways, but it heeds not his coming or his going.

These great Siberian rivers specially impress the imagination, because their sources lie in unexplored snowy solitudes, and from their middle course in habitable lands they descend into a frozen wilderness—*terra domibus negata*—to find their ending in an ice-bound sea.

We had just come from a long voyage up and down another famous river, the Chinese Yangtze, singularly unlike its Siberian sisters in this, that it is the central avenue of commerce through a highly cultivated country, passing on its way many cities swarming with people, and bearing on its bosom not only steamships, but fleets of sailing craft such as can be seen nowhere on the Rhine or Danube or Mississippi, or even on the Nile, where once they carried all the traffic of the country. Here, on the Obi, not a sail was to be seen and hardly even a row-boat. The steamer calls rarely, and then it is to discharge or take in freight, for passengers are few.

Like the Mississippi and the Volga in their middle courses, the Obi has scooped out for itself a wide flat or depression—one can hardly call it a valley—about seventy feet below the general level of the steppe and swings itself hither and thither across this flat, so that when it is close under the high bank of the steppe on one side it is far from the high bank on the other. The steep banks are of alluvial soil, showing in this region no rock, and usually bare, but the low shores and the islands are covered with a growth of willows and poplars. The few villages on the shore, usually planted where a small side stream comes down, are clusters of rough wooden huts, irregular and dirty, with the blue cupola of a white-washed church rising in the midst.

The peasants, stalwart fellows in coarse coloured flannel or cotton shirts, crowd down to the landing-place when the boat puts in ; the women, not handsome, but with pleasant, kindly faces, wear gaudy blue or red or yellow skirts, and handkerchiefs mostly tied round their heads. All are Russians whose parents or grandparents have come into Siberia within the last century and a half. It is only in the town of Barnaul, a commercial centre to which all the mineral ores are brought from the mountains, that one sees now and then an aboriginal nomad from the Kirghiz steppes to the south. All this country was till recently the home of the nomads roving with their cattle and horses over the boundless wastes.

Some hours beyond Barnaoul, hills begin to show themselves all along the southern horizon, even as before one reaches Calgary on the Canadian Pacific Railway tiny projections on the level prairie grow gradually into heights, till finally one recognises in them the Rocky Mountains. So, rejoicing at last to descry the outlines of the Altai, we came late in the evening to Bysk, a place of some importance, to which all the butter coming from the pastures which lie around is brought, and to which timber from the vast mountain forests beyond is floated down the River Biya, which, when it has been joined a few miles lower down by the River Katun, issuing from the Altai, takes the name of Obi. Bysk lies at the

edge of the steppe between the Biya and the steep acclivity here rising nearly two hundred feet above the stream, and is a brisk, thriving place, with a good many people of the middle class, traders, and Government officials.

Through one of the latter (whose tardy action I ought, probably, had I better known the "manner of the god of the land," to have accelerated by an application to the itching palm) I managed to engage a tarantass, the only kind of vehicle for travel that is suited by its structure for the country it has to traverse. It seats four persons (two behind and one beside the driver), has four low wheels, and short poles supporting the low frame, which play, however inadequately, the part of springs in reducing the jolts and shocks of the rough cart tracks, full of stones and holes, which are here called roads. Beside the two horses, a third, running outside, is usually harnessed.

Our party included an interpreter and a police sergeant, travelling in a second tarantass and told off to accompany us, not for protection, since the country is perfectly safe, but rather to ensure our getting horses at the post stations on the way towards Mongolia. We set off on 18th August, crossing the broad stream of the Biya in a large ferry-boat.

Each post station, which is bound to provide horses for travellers presenting a "Crown Podoroshna," has one or two small, passably furnished

rooms reserved for the use of officials, and called the Zemstvo Quartier. There are usually two beds, but into these we never ventured, preferring to sleep on the light thin mattresses which, according to a custom general everywhere outside the larger towns, we carried with us and laid on the floor. After a long day's jolting in the open air one can sleep on the hardest floor.

The people were always civil and kindly, and gave us what food they had, black bread, usually butter also, which was always good, and sometimes eggs; but vegetables were never, and meat scarcely ever, obtainable. We had brought with us some biscuits, a little tea (needless, because it is the beverage of the country) and preserved meat and desiccated soup, the latter always to be recommended whenever hot water can be had.

Every morning we started as soon as the horses could be got, and never reached the night's halting-place till after dark, yet could seldom cover twenty-five miles a day, for the tarantass cannot, along such tracks—allowing for the changing of horses and other delays on the road—accomplish more than an average of three or four miles an hour, and we might just as well, and, indeed, with more pleasure, have journeyed on foot, but for the frequent swamps and occasional downpours of rain. Twenty-five miles is an easy day's walking in exhilarating mountain air, if one has no knapsack to carry.

The first ten hours of driving were over the rolling grassy steppe. The second afternoon brought us into soft valleys between the lower hills, valleys filled with flowers of many brilliant hues, such as one might find on the lower slopes of the Alps in July. This was August, but as here the snow does not melt away till May, the flowers bloom later. They were mostly of west European genera, some of them British species—blue larkspur, salvias, columbines, and (if I remember right) the blue Jacob's Ladder, purple and yellow aconites, campanulas, gentians, and the white grass of Parnassus (a plant widely scattered over the world), the tall pink willow herb, and, in great profusion, one of the most ornamental among British wild flowers, the purplish-blue geranium (*Geranium pratense*). Such a wealth of colour massed in pastures I have seldom seen.

On the third day we reached a charming hollow surrounded by cliffs, whose sheltered situation and pure air have occasionally drawn to it a few visitors threatened with tubercular disease. It would be an excellent spot for a sanatorium if the track which leads to it were rendered passable for invalids, and if there were an inn. Not far off a Russian landscape painter had made a studio for himself in a hut. He was absent, and as it stood open, we inspected his studies of Altaian scenery, which were decidedly clever, though

rather hard in colour. These were the only signs that met us during the journey to indicate that any one ever comes here from the plains except on official business, or to look after the very slender trade in wool coming across the passes from Mongolia. It was a singularly beautiful valley—bold rocks rising out of the forest and the splendidly bright torrent of the Katun sweeping down through pastures gemmed with alpine flowers.

Desiring only to convey a general impression of the region, I will not attempt to describe the course of our wanderings, nor the difficulties encountered on tracks sometimes rocky, sometimes perilously near the crumbling edges of deep ravines, nor in plunging through swamps where large stones hidden in the mud all but capsized our luckless vehicle into the water. Worse still, or at least more repulsive, were the risks we ran of being overset in the mire of the track where it led into and through the villages, for here all the space between the houses was a bottomless sea of the foulest black farmyard filth, immersion in which would have left the traveller's clothes "a thing to dream of, not to tell."

All these and many other drawbacks to an Altaian journey are more than compensated by the views one gets from the heights, as well as by the wild charm of the pathless woods and the sparkling torrents that foam down the glens.

The vales and the hill-sides remind one of the Scottish Highlands or the White Mountains of New England; for the rocks, mostly of slate or schist or gneiss, have the same deep blue tones and glitter with similar crystals. The heather of Scotland and the patches of purple heath are wanting, but the rich green pastures, surrounded by woods or dotted with clumps of trees, and gay with alpine flowers, are a delight, and the rushing streams scatter sweet music through the forest silence. In the gentler landscape we saw nothing comparable to the finer parts of the Italian Alps, or to the canyons of the Sierra Nevada in California, or to the luxuriance of the valleys that lie beneath the majestic summits of the Caucasus. Neither have the wider prospects the fascination that belongs to the grandest views from mountain summits to be had in the Alps or Pyrenees. One panorama is obtained from the summit of a mountain above the Semenski Pass, a little over three thousand feet high. From it we looked out over an immense stretch of rugged ridges, full of strong lights and blue shadows, with bare peaks rising one behind another to where in the far south-east snowy pinnacles shone in the sunlight. But in this as in all these views there was wanting that pleasure of recognising far away some point that could be identified as already known, or that possessed some association, or seemed to assert for itself by its form some individuality. The

two Belukka peaks (14,700 ft.), believed to be the loftiest in the Altai and the centre of the only large mass of glaciers, were hidden by nearer heights. But the Unknown has also its fascination. One knew that beyond the furthest glint of sun in the dim distance, other mountains stretched for hundreds of miles to the edge of the Mongolian deserts—mountains enclosing valleys which no human foot might ever have entered.

I can fancy how some one who has wandered much over the world and noted how everywhere the ruthless hand of man is at work changing the face of Nature, might sometimes long to see some land other than uninhabitable deserts in which Nature will be suffered to remain what it was before man came, or at least before he developed that capacity for using tools and harnessing to his service Nature's forces which has brought about the immense multiplication of mankind. Will any land remain in which no huge cities will be built, no railroads constructed, no canals dug, no waterfalls dried up to furnish electric power, no fortresses erected to guard the frontiers of states,—no land so difficult of access that those who seek to exterminate the wild creatures will not resort to it for their pleasure, no land to which he who wishes to see what the world was before man appeared can betake himself for rest and solitude? If any such land is likely to be

left so untouched this may well remain that land for many a year to come. The solemnity of a Nature that has scarcely learnt to know of man seems to brood over it, and to throw over it a veil of mystery.

What we found peculiarly impressive in the Altai was the sense these hills and valleys gave of an untouched primeval wildness, remoteness, and immensity. The very breezes, whistling or moaning through the trees, sound like

> . . . a wind that shrills
> All night in a waste land where no man comes,
> Or hath come, since the making of this world.

Civilisation seems infinitely far away, for one is in regions where scarcely a sign meets the eye to show that man has cared to dwell, or will ever care to dwell, in this wilderness, save to fell the woods where a large river provides transport for the timber. It is a land not to be thought of in terms of time and space, for in it nothing has ever happened to measure time by, and in space it exists only as the gathering-place of the many waters that feed the great rivers, as yet receiving nothing from without and as yet producing hardly anything to send elsewhere.

From a station on the route into Western Mongolia we were forced to turn back, for the tarantass, which had been frequently repaired, was pronounced unfit to carry us any further along a track described as worse than that we

had traversed; so it was evidently impossible to reach the central snows of Belukka.

Taking a more westerly route on the return journey, we passed between bare, bold mountains, over several high table-lands, in some of which we met nomad Kirghiz tending their herds; in others Kalmuks, dwelling in round conical huts of bark, not unlike Indian wigwams. The former were Mussulmans of Turkic stock, the latter Buddhist Mongols, but in both there remains much of the old Shamanist spirit worship, which prevailed over all northern and central Asia before the spread from Arabia and from India of the two great religions aforesaid.

The people looked wild and unkempt, many of them wearing sheepskins or bearskins, but they are peaceful in aspect and with honest, simple faces, not wanting in intelligence. Round the Kalmuk huts birch poles are fixed, from which flutter strips of white linen, apparently meant to ward off evil spirits.

Both races, seldom cultivating the soil, live off their sheep, cattle, and horses, drinking the milk of all three, but loving best the *koumiss*, made of mare's milk, which, when fermented, becomes intoxicating. They are most expert horsemen, as were their ancestors of whose prowess as riders Marco Polo has much to tell, and the swiftness of their movements added to the terror they struck into the Germans, Slavs, and Italians,

on whom their sudden onsets fell. A Kalmuk or a Kirghiz never walks; like an Icelander, he jumps on his wiry little horse to go a hundred yards.

On these high plains one saw swarms of little burrowing creatures called tarbaghans, resembling the marmot of the Alps, scurrying to their holes as our vehicle approached; and at a spot where the ground was covered with the Alpine edelweiss (*Gnaphalium Leontopodium*) for fully a square mile, we saw a long train of camels stalking over the pasture—a strange juxtaposition of the plant that in Europe grows beside the glaciers with the denizens of the Arabian deserts.

Once we came suddenly on a huge eagle, bigger than the sea eagle of North America or the golden eagle of Europe, sitting on a low rock surrounded by a parliament of crows. He rose very slowly at our approach and sailed deliberately away while the parliament dispersed. He may possibly have been a Lammergeier, but did not seem to me quite the same as the splendid bird which I once saw circling over my head as I stood all alone on the top of a snow peak in the Engadine. Of hawks and falcons there are plenty (the Kirghiz train falcons to kill foxes), as there are of wolves, bears, and lynxes: but the tiger, though he can stand cold—for he is sometimes seen on the shores of Lake Baikal, and puts on a thick coat of fur in northern Korea—does not in this region come further north than the

marshes of Lake Balkash, some hundreds of miles to the south-west.

A few days more through picturesque rocky valleys brought us down to the smoother foothills, some of them showing those limestones which so often belong to the outliers of an ancient mountain mass, and thence over the steppe to the town of Bysk, whence we had started. There, after a farewell view of the mountains from the high bank above the River Biya, we embarked on a steamer even smaller than that which had carried us up from Novo Nikolaievsk, and having now the current of the river to speed our downward course, came in three days, making a long halt at Barnaul, back to Novo Nikolaievsk, where we fell in with and were hospitably entertained by the representatives of the great American firm which supplies agricultural machinery to half the Russian world.

Here we rejoined the railway, and here we boarded the train which was to carry us to Omsk and through the Urals to Moscow and Petersburg, thence to Königsberg in East Prussia (ancient capital of the Teutonic Knights and the home of Immanuel Kant), and so on to Berlin, where, ten months before the fateful days of July 1914, we were told (and, as I believe, honestly told) by a high official of the Foreign Office, that the diplomatic relations between Germany and England had been steadily improving.

And now a few parting words about the Altai as a place to attract travellers or mountain climbers in days to come, when Russia may again be open to the lover of natural beauty and adventure. Whether these highlands will ever become the mountain playground of Asia, as Leslie Stephen called the Alps the playground of Europe, may be doubted, for the Altaian landscapes, varied and charming as they are, and sternly grand as is the high glacier region, have not the more exquisite charm and the more inexhaustible variety of the Swiss and Italian Alps. But they, and the lofty ridges that continue the great line of elevation to the east as far as the River Amur, are the only Asiatic ranges in which mountaineering can be enjoyed as it is enjoyed in Europe, or as dwellers in North America enjoy it in the Sierra Nevada and the Rocky Mountains. They are more unlike the Alps than they are to the Canadian Rockies, or to some sections of Norway, or even to the wildest parts of the Scottish Highlands.

The Himalaya are incomparably grander, as well as far loftier, but there the summers are wet and intensely hot, and both the heights and the valleys are on a scale too vast for average human powers. To cross one single gorge like that of the Teesta below Darjiling, descending 7000 feet and mounting another 7000 to the opposite ridge, is work enough for a long day under an Indian sun—not to add that the travellers

must be attended by a small army of coolies to carry tents and a large provision of food. And yet, less interesting as are the Altai, the thirst for novelty may some day bring explorers, and climbing will be done in the thousand miles of lofty Siberian mountains, almost equal in height to the Alps, and equal to the Rockies that lie east of the 85th meridian of east longitude. Hunters, also, will come, and for a time at least they will find a fair number of wild creatures to destroy—deer, though scarcely any elk, as well as the wolf and bear and lynx, and the ibex that haunts the high crags, and in some spots on the Mongolian side of the range, the rare mountain sheep (*Ovis ammon*) with the great curved horns—a creature which, it is to be hoped, they will not be allowed to extirpate.

Though, owing to the impossibility of making the requisite preparations in Siberia, we were disappointed at having been debarred from attempting an effective reconnaissance of the region round the great peaks, we returned to civilisation half famished indeed, but sound in health, with the satisfaction of having seen new and most interesting aspects of Nature, and having caught glimpses of the life of ancient nomad races. The regions N. of Lat. 55 stretching east to Kamschatka may be left out of account. They are covered with forests, gradually diminishing in size towards the north, till the soil, in many places

waterlogged, no longer bears anything but stunted birches, being covered by thick spongy mosses. Here even population ceases except along the banks of the larger streams where the barbarous natives can live by fishing. These half-nomad tribes are still virtually, if not always nominally, heathen Shamanists. One hears, however, that the Yakuts, a widely scattered race, are wont to bring their babes to the nearest priest for baptism, receiving a few roubles for each child so brought within the fold. As priests are few and scattered far apart, the same baby, taken to one after another in succession to receive the rite, can earn fee after fee from the Church; and since this plan operates also as what is called an "Endowment of Motherhood," the Yakuts seem to have discovered a new method of "making the best of both worlds."

We carried back the recollection of a land of large, free, breezy, sunlit spaces, beautiful in summer, with a glorious abundance of flowers, and the impression of a people more cheerful and prosperous than we had expected to find in a country once associated with the cruelties of a tyrannical government and the sorrows of life-long exile.

Something too should be said of the economic future of Siberia, a subject that will become of high significance to the world, for here is to be found the one hitherto imperfectly developed

region in the temperate zones that has the greatest possibilities of future development for the production of food.

Omitting the districts in Eastern Siberia—comparatively small districts—that are fit for agriculture, and omitting, also, the far larger and more fertile territories along the River Amur, which Russia acquired seventy years ago when they were almost empty (the few inhabitants in 1913 were still uncivilised), there are between the Urals and the River Yenisei thousands of square miles available either for pasture or for cultivation. Into the southern and cultivable regions there had been flowing, down to A.D. 1913, mostly from central Russia, a steady stream, averaging 100,000 per annum, of industrious peasants to whom the Government gave farms. Though there were some large estates, Siberia has been, broadly speaking, a land of occupying farmers, ignorant, no doubt, and living very rudely, but intelligent, peaceable, and laborious. The cultivated area was being steadily extended, and beyond it, especially along the Obi and the middle course of the Irtish, the rich pastures were supporting an increasing number of cattle, so that an immense trade in butter had sprung up. Most of it was bought by Danish merchants and despatched in refrigerating cars to Western Europe, to be there sold as Danish butter.

Thus in 1913 the country was thriving with

every prospect of a rapid growth in wealth and population. There were few manufacturing industries, but the minerals hidden in the long mountain range that divides Siberia from Mongolia—some of which were already being worked in the upper basin of the Yenisei—are believed to be of immense value. That they had not been better ascertained and exploited, and that all the resources of the country had not been more swiftly developed, was attributed to the incompetence, and above all, to the corruption, of the imperial administration—a deeply rooted evil which neither well-meaning Tsars nor an energetic minister, if one now and then appeared, had been able to cure. Had Siberia been in the hands of Americans or Canadians from 1870 to 1910, its revenues and population would have been double what they were in the latter year, for the internal river communications would have been improved and the railway tracks into European Russia would have been duplicated or triplicated.

In 1913 men were discussing one expedient for increasing the trade of the country which a more enterprising Government would have done its best to encourage. The greatest want of Siberia is cheaper transportation for its heavy products to European markets, especially those of Germany, France, and England; and that which most reduces the value of its great rivers as freight carriers is the fact that their mouths in the Arctic

Ocean are difficult of approach, even in summer, because vessels may get caught in the Kara Sea east of Novaya Zemlya, and even if they reach the Gulf of Obi, where that great river touches salt water, may be unable to return with the cargoes they have loaded. The employment of wireless telegraphy may be expected greatly to reduce this risk, for by means of it approaching or departing ships could be kept informed from various points regarding those parts of the sea which may be open—there are always such parts in July and August—and their course could be so directed as to give them almost a certainty of escaping from being caught in the ice. As far back as the days of the Tsar Ivan the Terrible and the English Queen Elizabeth, a bold English captain tried this route with success, and there is reason to believe that nowadays vessels fitted with wireless apparatus could make pretty sure of safe voyages to and fro.

The economic progress I saw in 1913 was arrested by the war which broke out in Europe just a year later; and in 1917 there was fighting in Siberia itself between the Bolsheviks, who had then seized power in European Russia, and their opponents, who were organised for a time under Admiral Koltchak. The Bolsheviks prevailed, not because the Siberian peasants adopted communist doctrines, for those doctrines find no support in Siberia except among the few

town workers, but because the men who surrounded the unfortunate and entirely well-meaning Koltchak made themselves detested; so that his forces, at first successful, ultimately melted away before the Bolshevik advance with scarcely any resistance. They were not defeated; they evaporated.

What is happening in Siberia as I write these lines, in January 1922, few people in Western Europe know, and I am not one of them; but evidently the economic conditions must have gone sadly back since 1913. When will progress be resumed? When will the setting up of a stable and tolerably enlightened Government make progress possible? No sensible man will venture to prophesy about Russia; but one thing at least may be said: in the long run, economic factors are sure to prevail. They must assert themselves, because revolutionary disorders never last very long, since it is the general interest of the vast majority in every people to see a stable administration established; and when some strong man, or group of men, possessing the gift for rule have established it, the self-interest of the rulers prompts them to occupy the energies and promote the well-being of their subjects by extending facilities for trade and industry.

A few concluding words may be said as to the future generally. The history of Siberia was almost a blank, and had little interest for the

world at large, till 1917. The men of Great Novgorod had occasionally sent trading or raiding bands across the Urals in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the first invasion was under a robber chief named Yermak, who led his followers into the country in 1580. But thereafter conquest and colonisation went on unnoticed by Europe, with no serious resistance from the aboriginal inhabitants, who were weak and loosely scattered savage tribes. Thus there were really no events for historians outside Russia to record, and the process went on gradually and almost unobserved. The racial character of the Russian immigrants has (except in the Far East) been scarcely affected by any infusion of aboriginal blood, and so far as the Siberian Russians differ from the Russians of Europe, they are nowise inferior. Serfdom never existed in Siberia. The immigrants were mostly more adventurous and enterprising than their brethren who stayed at home. Those exiles who had been banished for political offences, real or alleged, often came from the intellectual *élite* of Russia, while the descendants of criminal convicts did not permanently stain the population, although some of those who escaped used, like the bushrangers of Australia, to scour the country as robbers.

Taken as a whole, the Siberians, if not fit to work democratic institutions, are quite as capable of local self-government as are the peasantry of

European Russia, and just as unlikely to become communists of the Marxian or any other stripe.

So far as I could learn, the only class in which political discontent, or indeed any signs of an interest in politics, existed, had been the students in the universities, who occasionally "demonstrated" or "struck work" when some particularly offensive piece of tyranny proceeded from the university authorities, often acting at the instance of the ecclesiastical authorities. There have been ferments among students everywhere in Russia for the last half-century, and now and then professors have been dismissed or exiled.

Whether Siberia will remain politically a part of Russia it is impossible to predict. An able English observer, who travelled there forty years ago (the late Mr. Ashton Dilke), then told me he thought Siberia would break away, peaceably or otherwise; but nothing I could learn in the country confirmed that forecast. The Transcontinental railroad has become a bond of union, and the Ural Mountains, though they would form a good natural boundary if the peoples living on each side differed in race, speech, and religion, do not—the facts being what they are—constitute a barrier worth regarding. It is much to be wished that they did form such a dividing line, for the Russian Empire before 1914 was an unwieldy mass, too big for any one set of men to govern, even had there been in power any men

more capable and honest than Russian ministries have ever been.

In 1913 the Russian Government, moved by that insane impulse which induces States to extend territories already too large, was trying to establish political control over Mongolia as far as the frontiers of China, and this portentous expansion of Russian dominion and the growth of Russian population had become a danger to the world. True, it was a danger much reduced by the stupidity and corruption of the Government, but if a malign fate had set a genius like Frederick the Second of Prussia, or Napoleon, on the throne of the Tsars, things might have gone ill for Europe.

For its own sake, as well as for the world's sake, it is much to be desired that Siberia as well as Transcaucasia should be politically disjoined from Russia; and if the inhabitants of Siberia were capable of working a system of federal government, such a system, consisting of five or six federated states between the Urals and the Pacific, would be better than one huge unitary empire or republic.

What sort of political future may this or the next generation expect to see? Neither Russia nor Siberia is likely to enjoy free popular constitutional government within any period which conjecture can now assign. But neither is it likely that the economically ruinous despotism

which now rules both countries will long retain its present form, or that the incompetent despotism of the Tsars will return.

There may be times of strife, for the habit of obedience has been broken, and there is now no legally constituted authority for the citizen to obey. But anarchy never lasts long. Nothing forbids the hope that the natural action of economic forces will, perhaps within a few years, install some sort of settled government, able to maintain order and to encourage men to resume their daily work in a normal way. It is indeed probable that the peasants of the Upper Obi may now be living quietly, much as I saw them in 1913, although their products are no longer exported to Europe.

So soon as Siberia obtains such a government, her natural resources and the industry of her people will enable material progress to start afresh, and she will some day become what Western America became seventy years ago, and Argentina became forty years ago—one of the great food-producing countries of the world.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER ON ICELAND

I WAS one of the two friends who accompanied James Bryce on his visit to Iceland in the autumn of 1872. The other was Æneas Mackay, then practising at Edinburgh as an advocate of the Scottish Bar. We had travelled together before in the Alps and elsewhere, and two years later Mackay was the companion of Bryce in their assault on Ararat, when Bryce alone reached the summit.

Our first intention in 1872 was to make Norway the scene of our autumn holiday, but, almost at the last moment, Mackay diverted our plans to Iceland. He had heard of a trading steamer which was to sail from Leith to Seyðisford on the east coast of Iceland and to return from Reykjavik some three weeks later. Those three weeks, he suggested, might be well spent in a ride across some parts of an island then known to us only by description. Hence the voyage to Seyðisford and the ride by Myvatn (Midge-water—ominous name) to Akureyri, a little hamlet on the north coast. Here we were met by the disquieting news that the return voyage from Reykjavik was not to come off. Apparently the trading venture had not been a success. Could we catch the next mail steamer? Not, they said, by the ordinary western route, but it *might* be possible to cross the central desert by a shorter, less known, and more difficult route. Hence the desert journey which Bryce has described. We started at an early hour, but I, as the junior member of

the party, was left temporarily behind to bid farewell to our kind hosts at Akureyri. A responsible task, for the stirrup-cups included such items as beer, corn-brandy, and sacrament wine, and the rule was "no heel-taps." But, by the grace of Odin, the junior member was able to mount his pony and ride several miles to rejoin his party. When he found them, Sigurðr, the guide, was at their head, gaily waving his whip aloft.

Sir Richard Burton was in Iceland while we were there, but we did not happen to come across him. He has left an account of his Iceland experiences in the book entitled *Ultima Thule: or, a Summer in Iceland*, which was published in 1874. It would be interesting to compare his narrative with Bryce's impressions. No two great travellers ever differed from each other more profoundly, in sympathies, antipathies, and points of view, than Bryce and Burton.

What were the main impressions left by Bryce as a fellow-traveller? What made him the most delightful of travelling companions? Was it his rich intellectual equipment, the unfailing memory, the inexhaustible stores of knowledge, which seemed to supply everything that the inquisitive traveller ought to know, which suggested associations, historical or other, for every place visited? He had read widely the literature both of the modern and of the ancient world. He had learned all that was to be learned from Konrad Maurer and others about early Icelandic laws and institutions. He knew and loved the Icelandic Sagas, and would listen to long recitations from Njala (Dasent's *Story of Burnt Njal*) in an Icelandic rectory or farmhouse. In later days, when Bryce was at Washington, President Roosevelt would draw up his knees and slap them with delight if he suceeeded in eliciting Bryce's stores of knowledge about the Sagas.

When we were detained at Reykjavik late in the

autumn, Bryce and I, with the help of a local professor, spent many hours in spelling out Egil's Saga. I have recently refreshed my memory of it, and I am sorry to say that I find it harder reading now than I did fifty years ago. Bryce had a good working acquaintance with many modern languages. The Icelandic language has been said to be the delight of the grammarian and the despair of the traveller. Our conversational knowledge of it in 1872 approached zero, but could sometimes be supplemented from other sources. The Reykjavik professor, the up-country priest, would occasionally produce a Latin sentence or two, though the up-country Latin was apt to be queer. At Reykjavik a member of our party once succeeded in using Latin for the sale of a pony. He was accosted in a sentence which might have come straight out of Henry's *First Latin Book*, a work which was once familiar to schoolboys, and fragmentary remembrances of which were, in 1872, found useful for conversational purposes. "Rusticus quidam, amicus meus, vult emere equum tuum varicolorem, quanti stabit?" Eventually a bargain was struck, and the piebald was sold for so many "imperialibus" (rix dollars).

Now for a specimen of up-country Latin. At Thingvellir our greeting from the local priest was "Temfus havemus optimum, jao jao (yow yow), temfus havemus optimissimum." The modern Icelander, like the ancient Vascon, is apt to interchange his labials. If Latin or Danish failed, the resources of civilisation were not exhausted, and other languages might be called into play. One evening, after a long and fatiguing ride, we were trying to see what kind of a meal could be concocted at an Icelandic farmhouse. "Ma dov' è il frying-pan?" was Bryce's query to the startled daughter of the house.

Bryce's interests were multiform, and were not confined to human nature. He inherited from his

father his love for and knowledge of botany and geology. In Iceland he was always jumping off his pony to inspect some interesting plant or geological feature, just as in the Alps he was always skipping up a hill or cliff for some similar purpose.

But it was not Bryce's rich intellectual gifts that endeared him chiefly to his friends. For a friend in trouble his sympathy was unfailing, practical, helpful. Should a travelling companion be temporarily incapacitated by fatigue or illness, Bryce's solicitude for him would be tender and unremitting. He would watch over him and minister to all his needs. These are things that an old friend and travelling companion can never forget.

The Iceland journey was merely an episode in a life-long friendship, and its incidents have been blurred and dimmed by time. But the memories of friendship are indestructible. Of what Bryce's friendship has meant for me I cannot trust myself to speak.

C. P. ILBERT.

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